

# CINEFANTASTIQUE

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Volume 18 Number 1

## ROBOCOP

MAKING A SCIENCE FICTION HIT

### PRINCE OF DARKNESS

Director John Carpenter gets back to horror basics

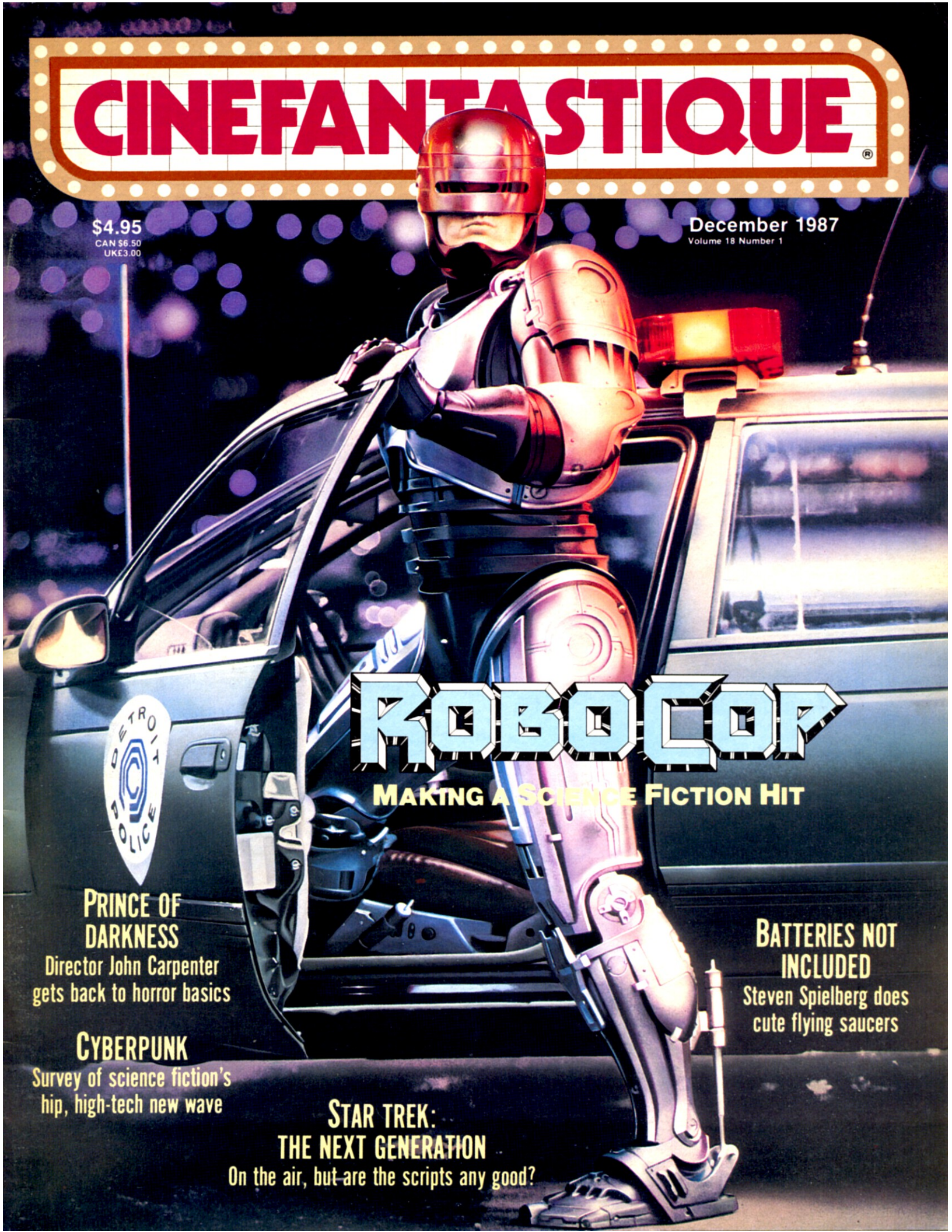
### CYBERPUNK

Survey of science fiction's hip, high-tech new wave

**STAR TREK:  
THE NEXT GENERATION**  
On the air, but are the scripts any good?

### BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED

Steven Spielberg does cute flying saucers



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This issue takes a closer look at the making of the summer's science fiction sleeper hit, ROBOCOP—from the makeup of Rob Bottin to the effects of Phil Tippett to the work of director Paul Verhoeven. Also spotlighted as the prime mover behind the hard-hitting futuristic tale is producer Jon Davison, who nurtured it two-and-a-half years to the screen. It was Davison who assembled and guided the creative elements which purveyed the genre with such refreshing wit, style, and intelligence.

A companion piece surveys the literary field of "cyberpunk," science fiction's hip, high-tech new wave, of which ROBOCOP is a prime cinematic example. Writers in the field, cross-pollinated with the imagery of films like MAD MAX and BLADE RUNNER, as well as rock videos, are garnering some of science fiction's top awards. Also examined is the television phenomenon of MAX HEADROOM, cyberpunk's video beachhead, and upcoming film projects involving luminaries in the field.

The issue looks ahead as well to some of the more interesting horror, fantasy, and science fiction film projects scheduled for release in the months to come. Director John Carpenter gets back to horror basics with PRINCE OF DARKNESS. Fantasy master Jim Henson premieres his new fairy tale television series THE STORYTELLER. And best-selling horror author V. C. Andrews comes to the screen with FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC. Also previewed is another publicity shy Steven Spielberg project, BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED, a heartwarming fantasy about cute anthropomorphic flying saucers scheduled just in time for Christmas.

*Frederick S. Clarke*

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# The STORYTELLER

*Jim Henson's unusual animatronic fairy tale pilot has spawned a series of specials to begin on NBC in November.*

*By Alan Jones*

After winning both critical and public acclaim with their half-hour television fantasy pilot *THE STORYTELLER*, telecast last January on NBC, executive producer Jim Henson began production on four more segments at the beginning of August, to be aired as a series of specials, beginning on NBC in November. Henson plans to shoot four more episodes next year.

The base of operations for the Henson Associates, Inc. fairy tale series is North London's Lee International Studios where Barbra Streisand filmed *YENTL*. John Hurt, star of *ALIEN*, *THE ELEPHANT MAN*, and 1984, will again undergo a two-hour makeup stint each day as the featured narrator for the series—a TVS production in association with Henson. TVS is a British independent television company based in the South of England. Henson's Creature Shop will build and operate all the animatronic puppets required for the prestige series. Brian Froud, the conceptual designer of *THE DARK CRYSTAL*, *LABYRINTH*, and the pilot shot last August, is not returning for the series due to commitments on his own projects.

The executive in charge of production for *THE STORYTELLER* is 37 year-old Duncan Kenworthy, who joined the Henson group in 1979 and moved to New York. Henson had been impressed with Kenworthy's supervision of the preparation of the Arab television version of *SESAME STREET* and asked him to be associate producer on *THE DARK CRYSTAL*—an offer Kenworthy didn't refuse because he had been waiting for an



John Hurt as *THE STORYTELLER*, and his animatronic dog. The series of half-hour specials premieres on NBC in November. Hurt's makeup has been simplified (inset) to speed production.

opportunity to move back to London. A television show based on traditional fairy tales seems like an obvious format to showcase the talents of the Henson Organization. Kenworthy explained why *THE STORYTELLER* took so long to come about.

"Jim Henson has always been keen on doing the less obvious," said Kenworthy. "When he realized there was something that hadn't been done before with fairy tales, he got interested. Strangely enough, the series idea came about because his daughter, Lisa, now a vice-president in charge of development at Warner Bros, had been a folklore major at Harvard. She said to him one morning, 'You know you really should be doing something with

fairy tales, treating them as they ought to be done, like oral literature.' No one's ever done it before. People have only taken the stories and ransacked them for dramatic incident, losing what makes them special—the words and the sound of a man's voice telling a tale and invoking a host of images. That made the idea suddenly very special for Henson. We talked about it, because my background is also in literature, and I cottoned to the concept immediately and found it very exciting. So we pushed it from the back to the front burner on our list of projects to tackle."

Since the concept of filming a storyteller relating a story lacked visual impact, Henson and Kenworthy's first task was to come up with a format to visualize the medium's oral traditions in an interesting and unusual way. They began by asking themselves what effect hearing a story has on an audience—it stimulates the imagination—and what is the modern equivalent of storytelling?

"The answer, of course is rock videos," said Kenworthy. "In a strange way the music track is the story backbone, but the images don't stick to a form, they jump about with ideas triggered from the lyrics. We thought of using very striking images that don't follow the narrative conventions of establishing shots and intercutting to try something unusual. This rock video approach—without the rock—led to the hiring of rock video director Steve Barron (*ELECTRIC DREAMS*) to do the pilot.

Though Kenworthy said that the creations of the Creature Shop are now "viable for television presentation," the emphasis on the animatronic characters in the pi-



**HANS, MY HEDGEHOG**, the pilot shown last January, featured the animatronic characters created by Jim Henson's Creature Shop: Hans (above) and stern father (right), astride a chicken. The series will present lesser known tales, retaining oral traditions.



lot—and in the forthcoming series—is less than one might expect, due to budgetary considerations. Because of long development, set-up and filming schedules required for Creature Shop characters, they don't come cheap. Because the pilot was budgeted so expensively—Kenworthy wouldn't discuss figures—Henson has pursued deficit financing on the series. Production funds from both NBC and TVS don't cover costs, but Henson plans to recoup his investment and make a profit with sales to other overseas TV networks. "We're not talking here of AMAZING STORIES budgets," said Kenworthy. "If only we had the money Spielberg had."

Actually, Kenworthy sees the judicious use of the animatronics as being to the show's benefit. "I feel the show has much more impact because we aren't trying to tell a creature tale but a human tale in which creatures are only a part," he said. "The balance between actors and creatures makes it easier to do the effects in a better way because they aren't focused on as the prime factor. You can do a throwaway scene, like the hedgehog baby in the pilot, which took a great deal of time to perfect and perform. You only show it for ten seconds and it registers as such a strong lasting image because you don't see more."

The "Hans, My Hedgehog" pilot took seven ten-hour shooting days to film. Kenworthy has shortened the schedule further for the series to six days. "I'm hoping the experience gained on the pilot will stand us in good stead and make everything much more efficient," he said, somewhat nervously. "NBC originally wanted THE STORYTELLER to be a weekly series but

it was a collective decision to change it to a series of specials. We just knew we wouldn't be able to do it on that basis."

The show is shot in 35mm and transferred to video for post-production. Like the pilot, the series will be scripted by Anthony Minghella, who only recently began writing for television. The show won't use well-known fairy tales like "Cinderella" or "Sleeping Beauty." Among the episodes slated for production are "A Story Short," which features storyteller John Hurt more integrally, when he is unable to recall one of his tales, and "The Luckchild," a combination of three Rumanian folk tales about a child prophesized to inherit a kingdom. Directors set for the first four segments include Jon

Amiel, who won major plaudits for the Dennis Potter television mini-series THE SINGING DETECTIVE, Steve Barron, Charles Sturridge of BRIDESHEAD REVISITED fame, and Jim Henson.

"Since the pilot was so well received, many directors are coming to us," said Kenworthy. "Nic Roeg has said he'd love to do an episode. Mike Redford too, thanks to the John Hurt 1984 association. Neil Jordan has expressed an interest as well. Directors seem to find the show attractive. They only involve a short amount of time and they work with members of a creative field many of them are tantalized by. It's almost like the early days of THE MUPPET SHOW when top stars would beg to be guests." □

# COMING

## NIGHTFLYERS

SF author George R. R. Martin on getting filmed by Hollywood.

By Steve Biodrowski

"When Jesus of Nazareth hung dying on his cross, the *voleryn* passed within a year of his agony, headed outward . . ."

Thus begins George R. R. Martin's novella *Nightflyers*, which serves as the basis for the film of the same name, to be released by New Century/Vista on October 30. Martin's story concerns a crew of misfit academics, aboard a charter ship called the *Nightflyer*, in search of the *voleryn*: "a race of sentients moving out from some mysterious origin in the core of the galaxy, sailing towards the galactic edge and . . . bound for intergalactic space itself . . ." The *voleryn*, however, turn out to be something of a cosmic red herring, in that the novel is less a piece of speculative science fiction than a horror story set in outer space. New Century/Vista is playing up the horror element and has timed the release for Halloween.

Cinematic adaptations of literary works frequently fail to please the author, but NIGHTFLYERS seems to be an exception, despite some fairly significant departures from the novella. As Robert Jaffe,



Hugo and Nebula winner George R. R. Martin.

who produced and wrote the film, put it, "Thank god Martin worked on THE TWILIGHT ZONE. He understands the need to depart from the original material. I was so relieved when it was over and he didn't slug me."

"I was generally pleased," said Martin. "There's a lot in it that's quite faithful—virtually all the important elements. Of course, I have a real personal connection to the original, so the things they made changes in I was less happy with, although one or two things were improvements."

The *Nightflyer* is piloted only by its captain, the mysterious Royd Erris, who appears to the research team only as a hologram; this naturally arouses curiosity and suspicion, and the suspicion is soon confirmed when the passengers begin to be killed off one by one. Most of the changes represent fairly standard Hollywood thinking about what makes a commercial film: mission coordinator Miranda Dorlac has been "humanized" (i.e. weakened) from being a genetically superior specimen into a standard love interest; the corpse of Royd's mother inexplicably comes to life at the climax; the *Nightflyer* explodes at the film's conclusion, providing a little cheap spectacle; and Royd

survives to live happily ever after with Miranda.

One of the more interesting changes involves the death of a telepath (played by Michael Des Barres) brought on board to communicate with the *voleryn*. In both book and film, he senses the presence of a malign, alien menace aboard the ship and tries to find out exactly what it is. In the book, he dies when that force explodes his skull. However, there have been quite a few exploding heads on screen since Martin wrote his story (including that of Robert Jaffe, who appeared in CREATURE), so Fritz Kiersch, who was originally set to direct before other commitments prevented him, insisted on another approach. In the film, the telepath becomes

possessed by the evil presence and tries to dissect Miranda with a surgical laser but has the weapon turned against him.

After Kiersch left the production, Robert Collector was brought in to direct, but his name will not appear in the film's credits either. During the editing, the Vista Organization was not pleased with Collector's cut of the film and insisted that changes be made. Rather than comply, Collector left the production and took his name off the film. "Creative differences," is the way Robert Jaffe described the situation. "He was unwilling to modify his vision of it. He's a sensitive, creative person. He would like to have had final cut."

After Collector's departure, Jaffe supervised the re-editing, working closely with the film's editor and with effects supervisor Gene Warren, who re-shot many of the miniature effects to help bridge gaps in continuity in the full-scale footage. Unfortunately, the results are a film that is not nearly as tight and coherent as the novella. Said Jaffe, "It's as good as it can be. In terms of production, I'm pleased it looks as good as it does."

Considering the low budget  
continued on page 55

## BLUE MONKEY REAL HORROR CUES COLOR CHANGE FOR GIANT INSECT SHOCKER

The makers of the Canadian-filmed horror GREEN MONKEY felt a color change was in order. Filmed by director William Fruet (SPASMS) in Toronto last spring, the office of producer Sandy Howard had the title switched to BLUE MONKEY in July. Publicists for the production, which will be released by Spectrafilm in October, had no explanation for the switch. It seems less arbitrary when you consider that the film itself has nothing to do with a monkey (it's about a giant insect mutation on the rampage in a county hospital).

Off-the-record, a source close to the production revealed that the title change was prompted by concern that the earlier title would be associated with the dreaded

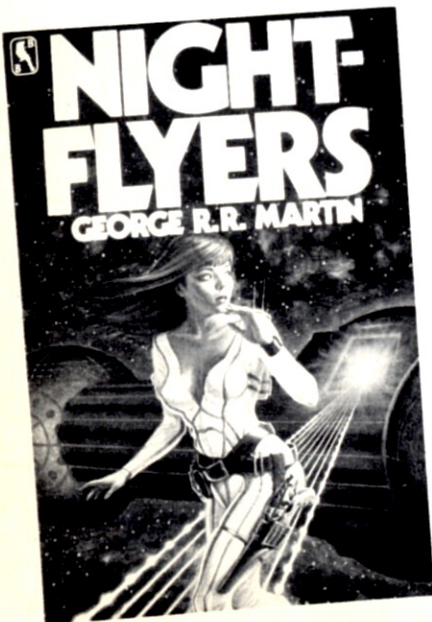


Enigmatic title is trouble for a film about a nine-foot insect mutation.

disease AIDS. After filming began the production office was flooded with calls from the media asking if the film was about the species of African monkey amongst which the virus is thought to have originally developed.

Steve Railsback (LIFE-FORCE) and Susan Anspach star in the film as the detective and doctor who try to contain the menace. The nine-foot insect was created for the film by a crew supervised by Hollywood makeup effects designer Steve Neill.

Gary Kimber



# Prince of Darkness

**Director John Carpenter ankles the majors and gets back to horror basics.**

By Dennis Fischer

A priest who is a member of a long forgotten sect of the Catholic Church called the Brotherhood of Sleep comes to physics professor Howard Birack of the Feynman Institute of Physics. Troubled by what he is discovering about an ancient cannister, the priest calls on Birack in hopes of getting some answers—or is it confirmation of some dread secret? There are strange signs about, most of them going unheeded. A new supernova, like the star of Bethlehem, is beginning to appear. Mindless insects are grouping together to perform some seemingly directed activity. Birack calls upon the brightest and best of his graduate students, as well as outside specialists and sets up shop in the basement of a long-abandoned church in the midst of downtown Los Angeles. There the cannister sits, encasing a churning liquid that seems to be coming to life, gen-

erating its own internal energy, surrounded by hundreds of crosses which seem designed to hold the contents at bay.

That's the basic premise of John Carpenter's new feature, *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*. After the bittersweet love story *STARMAN*, and *BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA*'s wild combination of Chinese magic, martial arts and chicanery, both of which were directed for the majors with budgets exceeding \$20 million, Carpenter is now intent on working independently and keeping the budgets of his films in check. *PRINCE OF DARKNESS* was made for Alive Films on a low budget and has been picked up for release October 23 by Universal.

Following the release of *BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA*, which Carpenter made for 20th Century-Fox in 1986, the director went public with his dissatisfaction with studio interference in working for the majors. Said *PRINCE OF*

Awed scientists Anne Howard and Ann Yen inspect the film's mysterious cannister, built by Craig Talmay's Sho-Glas Props under the supervision of Steve Patino.



Carpenter directs Donald Pleasence in the subterranean bowels of a church where a strange phenomenon is about to rock the tenets of science and religion.

*DARKNESS* producer Larry Franco, a long-time Carpenter associate, "I think John will continue doing independent films for a while and see what happens. I think it would be very difficult for him after this picture, to give up some of the creative control he's gotten."

Franco has worked with Carpenter ever since *ELVIS*, the highly successful movie-of-the-week Carpenter directed in 1979, serving as an assistant director. Franco began in the film industry as an extra and became an A.D. after entering the DGA Assistant Directors Training Program. He was first A.D. on Carpenter's *THE FOG* (1981) and with *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK* (1981) assumed the responsibilities of co-producer as well. He's worked as a line producer on all of Carpenter's subsequent projects.

Franco described *PRINCE OF DARKNESS* as "a cross between *THE EXORCIST* and *THE THING*. It deals with demonic possession and it's about a group of people trapped in a claustrophobic environment. It's very scary." The film's melding of horror and science fiction motifs smacks of the grand synthesis of genres made by Nigel Kneale in *QUATERMASS AND THE PIT*, the third segment of The Quatermass trilogy filmed by

Hammer in 1967 under the title *FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH*. Though early announcements of *PRINCE OF DARKNESS* listed Carpenter as its writer as well as director, the production credits the script to Martin Quatermass. Franco denied that the name is a Carpenter pseudonym.

Franco said the *PRINCE OF DARKNESS* script was submitted to Carpenter and the director loved it. Shep Gordon and Andre Blay of Alive Films put up the money for filming and gave Carpenter the creative control to make the film his own way. "On this, Carpenter and I have nobody to answer to in terms of getting the picture made," said Franco. "It's been a lot easier and a whole lot more fun."

Carpenter's flight from the majors and their deep pockets has caused him to put some of his big-budget projects on hold, such as a film version of Alfred Bester's classic science fiction novel *THE STARS MY DESTINATION*, scripted by Lorenzo Semple, Jr., a pet project long in development. "There's a lot of money wasted on these kinds of films," said Franco. "If you could do them and put \$40 million on the screen, maybe it would be worth it. But you can't do that because in order to get \$40 mil-

continued on page 57

# THE HIDDEN

*This New Line Cinema Halloween release is a cops vs. alien story.*

By Kris Gilpin

For director Jack (A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART 2) Sholder, the screenplay for New Line Cinema's HIDDEN was a case of love at first sight. "It was one of the best scripts I've read," he said of his latest feature. "It had humor, imagination, an unrelenting pace and good characters. Basically, I read the script and thought, Gee, I'd like to see this movie, so I figured it'd be great to see it and have my name on it."

This story of alien infestation, which hops from body to body (human or animal) indiscriminately, was written by Jim Kouf and, as Sholder put it, "had two great heroes and a wonderful villain. Hitchcock always said that good villains make good movies, and it's probably the oddest alien I've ever run across, because it likes to party!"

HIDDEN was shot over 45 days, on a budget of \$4½ million, throughout Los Angeles. The science fiction thriller stars Michael (FLASHDANCE) Nouri and Kyle (BLUE VELVET) MacLachlan as a cop and FBI man, respectively, who chase the parasitic alien through some seedy Southern California streets and locales. New Line plans to release the film October 30th.

"The alien goes into six charac-

Possessed patient, William Boyett, bearing tell-tale signs of the alien infestation, goes on a crime spree.



The alien leaves its human host, a burn victim, to slither down the throat of a nearby hospital patient, a puppet effects sequence by Kevin Yagher.

ters, plus a dog, and the challenge for me was to try to create one character who moved through six bodies and an animal, even though the bodies are very different," explained Sholder, who started at New Line as a trailer editor 15 years ago. "At one point it goes from a very sick, elderly man's body into the body of a beautiful stripper."

The evil alien is only seen once or twice in the film. At one point it performs a mouth-to-mouth transfer. The effect, by makeup man Kevin Yagher, was achieved through the use of a couple of amazingly life-like puppet heads. "The heads were absolutely extraordinary, totally believable," said Sholder. "You look at it and you are looking at the actor, down to the tiny little hairs on the nose. It was scary. In fact, the actor took one look at it and said, 'Get it away from me!'"

Despite Sholder's experience, making eight short films and an award-winning PBS special, THE GARDEN PARTY, before tackling his first feature he claims, "on this film I had to figure out what the hell I was doing every day. I had never shot a cop movie and I wanted to shoot it in a very realistic way." This included the process of filming chase and gun fire gags on actual city streets, and not in a studio. Also employed for the sake of verisimilitude was a real-life detective who served as technical advisor on police procedure and attitude, a function the advisor had previously performed for LETHAL WEAPON.

One of the most challenging

sequences came for the director in a scene he wrote for the film, in which MacLachlan's FBI character storms an official news conference to fry the alien (which is sporting another human facade) with a flamethrower. "It was a very complicated scene, with a lot of shooting and chaos," he said.

Commenting on the interplay between main actors Nouri and MacLachlan, Sholder said, "There are some very good dramatic scenes between their characters. What I really felt was important with this picture was that, oddly enough, it's a relationship picture, a buddy movie. Their relationship is really the key to the movie. They have a friendly but antagonistic relationship at first, and to watch that happen between the two actors was something to see."

Special effects in the film include a "space weapon" which throws a deadly beam of light. In contrast to the fantastic elements in the film, Sholder strove for a gritty, realistic look in the cinematography. "I wanted to try to keep it pretty realistic," he said, "so the whole thing just didn't become silly. Often times what separates a good movie from a so-so movie is that there's a certain kind of snap a movie has, a certain authority when things are done right and in a way that feels true. My watchword to Jacques Haitkin, director of photography, was 'gritty, but not grainy' to give it that feel. Then we would juxtapose something that was a little out of place, like a certain color, particularly when the alien was around [which suggested a fantasy element]."

## THE RUNNING MAN

SCHWARZENEGGER FLEXES CONTRACTUAL MUSCLES FOR DELAY

Tri-Star has set the release of THE RUNNING MAN for November, after postponing its summer opening. Filmed by Taft-Barish Productions, the troubled project starring Arnold Schwarzenegger in a futuristic tale by Stephen King has gone through five directors and seen its budget balloon from \$10 to \$27 million. But that's not the reason for the film's delay according to Schwarzenegger, who said he flexed his contractual muscles to hold up the film to keep it from competing with his other summer hit, PREDATOR.

"When the studio saw some of the dailies, they got all excited and said the summer would be the best time to come out," Schwar-



Schwarzenegger and Yaphet Kotto.

zenegger said. "But my deal with them was quite different. It had to come out in the fall or early winter. They wanted to go back on their word for a while, but then they reconsidered."

In the film, directed by Paul Michael Glaser, Schwarzenegger plays the quarry in a TV show where contestants are hunted by exotically armed stalkers. FAMILY FEUD host Richard "kiss-kiss" Dawson is featured as the congenial TV announcer who provides the color commentary for the stalking matches. The film's futuristic special effects are being supervised by Gary Gutierrez at San Francisco's Colossal Pictures, the supplier of effects for THE RIGHT STUFF.

Dann Gire



# TEEN WOLF 2

**Atlantic again plays werewolves for laughs—all the way to the bank.**

*By Kyle Counts*

Atlantic Entertainment is betting that moviegoers who flocked to see *TEEN WOLF*, the 1985 hit comedy with Michael J. Fox (gross to date: \$50 million world-wide), will brave the chilly winds of November in record numbers to see *TEEN WOLF TOO*, the sequel, starring television's Jason Bateman (currently a regular on NBC's *VALERIE*).

The \$3 million production was written by R. Timothy Kring and based on a story by *TEEN WOLF* writers Joseph Loeb III and Matthew Weisman. Returning from the original film are James Hampton as Bateman's werewolfish Uncle Harold and Mark Holton as Chubby. Chris Leitch, who as writer and director contributed significantly to the development of HBO's series *THE HITCHHIKER*, directs.

In *TEEN WOLF TOO*, Bateman plays Todd Howard, a science buff who enrolls in college (run by John Astin's Dean Dunn) on a boxing scholarship—even though the closest he's ever come to athletics is playing clarinet on the football field. He humors his coach (Paul Sand) and the other misfit teammates, continuing to



Jason Bateman in the new *Teen Wolf* makeup by the Burman Studios.

act as a human punching bag so that he can keep his scholarship and stay knee-deep in test tubes. Little does he know that the family curse he thought had skipped his generation is soon to turn him into a boxing superstar. (Bateman studied with a boxing coach for four weeks to "make it look like I knew what I was doing.")

Inspired by his biology teacher/counselor and earthly fairy-godmother Kim Darby, Todd dominates the league in collegiate boxing and leads his school to sports page glory. Still, he has one climactic fight left before he can truly walk

tall: should he step into the ring as Todd, or as Teen Wolf? It's one hairy dilemma.

Director Chris Leitch, who served as an assistant for Canadian filmmaker Jan Kadar on three films (including the acclaimed *LIES MY FATHER TOLD ME*), is well aware that some may regard *TEEN WOLF TOO* as little more than a cash-in sequel. But in his mind the two have little in common beyond a superficial story resemblance. "Certainly more care was put into this one than the original," said Leitch. "Every effort was made to ensure that this story would be unique."

Leitch thinks it is very likely that *TEEN WOLF TOO* will do for Bateman what the original did for Michael J. Fox (though *TEEN WOLF*'s success was unquestionably bolstered by the popularity of *BACK TO THE FUTURE*, which had been released a month before *TEEN WOLF*). Bateman's father, Kent, served as producer.

Leitch was quick to praise Bateman's professionalism—not only because of his demeanor on the set but because he willingly subjected himself to long, uncomfortable hours in a complicated werewolf makeup that would have done in others less dedicated. Tom Burman was not approached to do the makeup until a week and a half before filming commenced, even though he handled the makeup on the first film. When the look favored by Atlantic production executive Bill Tennant for Bateman's wolfish alter-ego fared unsatisfactorily in makeup tests, Burman and his wife Bari, working with assistants around the clock, made additional tests with Tennant's input, finally coming up with a design that pleased all concerned. (Foot-



*Teen Wolf* Jason Bateman, with Lori Griffin and Stuart Fratkin, turns out to be irresistible to girls on campus.

age was in the can when further refinements were called for, resulting in a wasted day's filming.) The final look was "a little more GQ," according to John Logan, who applied Bateman's makeup on the set with the assistance of Michael Smithson.

Atlantic, assured of *TEEN WOLF TOO*'s carry-over potential, is planning a huge release for the film, somewhere in the ballpark of 1200 screens. For Leitch, the film's almost certain success is due to more than its appeal as a sequel; for him, it's the time-tested formula of unreal events unfolding in a real world.

"The idea of living in a world where someone becomes a werewolf and we deal with him as a normal person rather than a monster, has always been funny to me," he said. "*TOOTSIE* is something to shoot for in terms of excellence on that level. Think of it: in *TOOTSIE* a guy becomes a better man by putting on a dress. Jason's character goes from being a boy to becoming a man by becoming a werewolf in between. It's not all that different."

About to kiss girlfriend Estee Chandler, Bateman turns unexpectedly wolfish.



# Pumpkinhead

**Wading in red ink, Dino DeLaurentiis' DEG looks to Stan Winston's directing debut for a hit.**

By Dan Scapperotti

The hills are alive with the sounds of screaming in DEG's latest attempt to harvest some green from a genre that, so far, has eluded them. Stan Winston, an Oscar-winning makeup expert, gets a chance to direct his first feature with PUMPKINHEAD, which the DeLaurentiis Entertainment Group releases October 23, just in time for Halloween. According to the script by Mark Patrick Carducci and Gary Gerani, the title character is a demon of vengeance invoked by the hill people of southern Pennsylvania.

Lance Henriksen, the android of ALIENS, plays a backwoods subsistence farmer who invokes the demon to avenge the death of his 10-year-old son, accidentally run down by a motley band of teenaged dirtbikers, led by loud-mouth John Di Aquino. Florence Schaufler plays the mountain witch that summons the demon for Henriksen, which proceeds to bump off the bikers one by one. Jeff East, who played the teenaged Clark Kent in SUPERMAN is a sympathetic biker who survives the onslaught with girlfriend Cynthia

Makeup artist cum director Winston.



Lance Henriksen plays a backwoods farmer who digs up a supernatural avenger.

Bain.

New World Pictures originally showed an interest in the project, but balked at the film's \$4 million budget. Producers Billy Blake, Howard Smith, and Richard Weinman found a willing financier in Dino DeLaurentiis. The script's southern Pennsylvania setting could have been easily duplicated by the rolling hills near the DEG studios in North Carolina. Instead the film was shot in California at Topanga Canyon.

When the producers approached Stan Winston to design the title creature, Winston surprised them by suggesting himself as director. Winston had directed second unit work on James Cameron's ALIENS and worked with Cameron on THE TERMINATOR. DEG was hesitant to go with a first-time director, but Winston was hired after several meetings with production chief Raffaella DeLaurentiis and her father. According to a source close to the production, Winston "learned a lot working for Cameron," and shot the film like "a backwoods TER-

MINATOR, using Cameron's style of coverage, lighting, and camera movement."

A five-person effects team consisting of John Rosengrant, Richard Landon, Tom Woodruff, Shane Mahan and Alec Gilis created the monster at Winston's studio. Woodruff plays the creature on screen. The demon resembles an occult version of ALIEN, humanoid, with a tail and huge talons. Landon was responsible for the mechanics and electronics that included leg extensions and a mechanical, radio-controlled head. Shane Mahan designed the makeup for Haggis, the mountain witch, described as "like Dustin Hoffman in LITTLE BIG MAN, with plenty of wrinkles and long horny nails."

Winston made script changes involving the monster action, adding a tormenting side to Pumpkinhead's nature. Instead of killing the bikers outright, the creature mangles them and leaves them half alive as bait to lure the next victim. The demon derives its name from two sources; its oversized head

and the cemetery where Henriksen finds the husk from which it grows, a place "filled with overgrown, cancerous, ugly pumpkins that seem supernaturally large."

In the story, Pumpkinhead only harms its intended victim, unless someone interferes. In a flashback, Henriksen, as a boy witnesses the reaction of his parents when they refuse entrance to a man being stalked by the legendary monster. The people of the mountain lock their doors against the pleas of the teenagers who go to them for help. A boy played by Brian Bremer, who has heard of the monster from his parents, is shown stealing out of his house to get a glimpse of the creature.

In a twist, there is a cost associated with invoking Pumpkinhead. Henriksen has seizures and blurred vision as he sees through the demon's eyes and experiences the agony of the victims. With each killing the formless face of the demon gradually takes on Henriksen's likeness and at the end kills him and takes his place.

A lot is at stake in DEG's hoped-for-success at the box-office with PUMPKINHEAD. After a string of costly flops like KING KONG LIVES! the company posted a quarterly loss of over \$15 million in June. At the time, the company's lending banks set a deadline of November 15 for DEG to increase its net worth from film revenues or to begin selling off assets. Production chief Raffaella De Laurentiis resigned her post with the distributor in August amid rumors that DEG would be taken over or merged with another company. The film faces stiff competition in a Halloween market glutted with other, more prestigious films, including John Carpenter's PRINCE OF DARKNESS. □



The Killer Klowns in their spaceship, disguised as a circus big top.

## KILLER KLOWNS

### THE CHIODO BROTHERS OFF-THE-WALL

By Ron Magid

The Chiodo brothers—Stephen, Charlie and Edward—the effects artists behind the creatures in CRITTERS, are making their own movie. After contributing effects to films like THE SWORD AND THE SORCEROR and ROBOCOP (the dinosaur TV commercial), the brothers branched out to write, direct and create the effects for their dream project—a feature film boasting the rather unusual moniker KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE. Trans World Entertainment plans to release the film in October and shorten the title to simply KILLER KLOWNS.

Stephen Chiodo, the eldest of the brothers and the film's director, said the initial concept for the bizarre story came to him as he was driving down a desolate mountain road. "I thought that a clown on a mountain road—or anyplace you wouldn't expect to see one—would be really frightening," he said. Brother Charlie suggested extraterrestrial origins for the Klowns and collaborated with Stephen on a script.

While Edward Chiodo handled the problems of getting the film produced, Stephen and Charlie began building and designing the Klowns and their spaceship, a psychedelic fun-house gone mad with weird angular setpieces painted in

fluorescent tones of red, yellow, and orange against black limbo. Art director Phillip Foreman, who worked with the Chiodos on CRITTERS, created a modular setpiece system of geometric shapes that could be recombined in variations to make the necessary sets. "We couldn't afford to build the four or five full-scale sets we needed," said Charlie Chiodo. "The turnaround was a bitch, but we didn't have to make new pieces for every set."

Stephen Chiodo refused to take the obvious approach to directing a film with a title like KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE. "It sounds like a camp farce," he admitted, "but I didn't want it to be that. There are funny elements in it, but there are also serious tones, suspenseful tones and even a bit of a love interest. We thought everything should be played distinctly. I tried to impress on our actors to play the serious stuff straight, but not so straight that it goes into camp. I didn't want them to play for laughs, but let the situations themselves be funny.

"We're trying to create a reality here that's totally unreal, that is fantastic, and we don't want people to laugh at it," continued the director. "The Klowns are deadly but they're funny. You're allowed to laugh at them, but hopefully you'll get kind of scared when they start killing people." □

## RETRIBUTION

*A stylish, inventive, low-budget shocker from television director Guy Magar.*

By Somtow Sucharitkul

RETRIBUTION, shot for a mere \$1.2 million scavenged up by director Guy Magar himself ("I lucked out") over a period of some years, turns out to be one of the more remarkable achievements in the low-budget thriller field: a sensual, highly charged revenge story with well-orchestrated, unobtrusive special effects, and a plot for the most part free of the bizarre logic lapses that plague even the best examples of its sub-genre. United Film Distribution plans to open the picture October 2 in New York and Los Angeles and then platform the release to 30 other key markets.

Dennis Lipscomb stars as an artist on the brink of suicide who becomes possessed by an unappeased spirit hell-bent on vengeance. Lipscomb carries the film with his obsessive, neurotic, haunted performance. Danny D. Daniels is amusing as a vaguely Caribbean voodoo figure.

"Most people with a million dollars want to make a slasher movie," said Magar, who has toiled as a director in such well-ploughed fields as THE A-TEAM and HARDCASTLE AND MCCORMICK. "I wanted to make a classic, an 'A' movie—one with a very special visual look."

Magar enlisted the help of an old buddy, cinematographer Gary Thielges, for some pretty stunning effects, including an eerie 360° crane shot, some sophisticated Steadicam work, and an ingenious "glowing neon eyes"



Leslie Wing becomes possessed at climax of Guy Magar's RETRIBUTION.

effect done with an ultraviolet-sensitive optometrist's solution instead of the usual rotoscoping. "And all for only \$5!" said Magar, beaming.

When you take away the film's intense, ostinato-like pacing and its much-vaunted production values, you're often left with dialogue of excruciating banality. But somehow the script's cliché-ridden lines ring true—due, perhaps, to the cast's uncanny ability to make them sound as though they were being uttered for the first time. □

Filming Dennis Lipscomb, possessed by an unappeased spirit hell-bent on vengeance. The production features the flashy camerawork of cinematographer Gary Thielges.



# PRISON

Producer Irwin Yablans tries to do for ghosts in the slammer what he did for HALLOWEEN.

By Steve Biodrowski

The ghost of a murdered man returns from the grave to seek revenge against the man responsible for his death. Sound familiar? The title PRISON may conjure images of films like ESCAPE FROM ALCATRAZ, but what audiences will actually be getting is a fairly straight-forward haunted house story—only the location has been changed. Empire will give the film, which may undergo a title change, a big push in November.

In 1956, Charlie Forsythe is sent to the electric chair for a murder he didn't commit. Guard Ethan Sharpe knows the truth but refuses to speak. After the execution, the primitive, turn-of-the-century prison is closed down—until thirty-one years later, when prison overcrowding necessitates its reopening. And, as fate would have it, Ethan Sharpe is installed as the new warden. Inevitably, the long-sealed execution chamber is opened, releasing Forsythe's vengeful spirit. It's up to inmate Connie Burke and penologist Katherine Walker to unearth the warden's guilty secret and put a stop to Forsythe's rampage.

PRISON is the first of a multi-picture deal between Irwin Yablans, the producer who made HALLOWEEN, and Charles Band's Empire Entertainment. Yablans produced the film, and Band served as executive producer. The script by C. Courtney Joyner was from a story by Yablans himself. "It's so hard to come



Prison guard Hal Landon, Jr. gets strangled by animated barbed wire.

up with new concepts for suspense-horror thrillers," said Yablans. "It's like HALLOWEEN: the most horrifying night of the year had never been touched for a horror movie; and, extending the concept, the most horrific institution in the world has never been handled in a horror movie."

Yablans worked closely with the writer because he enjoys thinking up special effects set pieces and then figuring out how to work them into the story. Early in the script writing stages, newcomer Renny Harlin (BORN AMERICAN) was brought in as director. (Said Yablans, "I like to work with young talent before they get too expensive or become too unmanageable.") Harlin wasn't too thrilled with the script, but he liked

the idea of setting a horror film in a prison.

Six weeks of principal photography, beginning May 18, were shot entirely on location in an abandoned State Penitentiary in Rawlins, Wyoming. Built in 1901, the prison had been in use until 1981 when it was replaced by a newer facility. Re-dubbed "Rawlins International Studios" by the crew, the prison housed the entire production, including Mechanical and Make-up Imageries, Inc., whose effects were shot entirely on location. Real prisoners from the new Wyoming State Penitentiary were recruited as extras, and one, Stephen Little, even landed a feature role. The prison conditions were far from comfortable—cold, damp, and claustrophobic—but

they lent an atmosphere otherwise impossible to achieve.

"From the very beginning I went for a film-noir type of dark, shadowy look and spent a lot of time with my cinematographer Mac Ahlberg creating and planning it," said Harlin. "It was hard. How do you light a real prison cell, which is so small that you can hardly get two people inside—and you have to have the sound crew and the camera crew and the lights and the actors? Ahlberg was able to do it, but it was a lot of extra work."

Continued Harlan, "I wouldn't have been interested in doing this film if it was just a special effects movie, because I wanted to have a story and real characters. I feel that's what's wrong with horror and science fiction films—that all they are trying to do is to have elaborate special effects and then throw in some kind of story and characters cut from cardboard. I think the audience is going to get tired of that sooner or later. I wanted the drama and the characters that you care about."

But why does guard Ethan Sharpe allow prisoner Charlie Forsythe to be executed even though he knows Forsythe is innocent? "Good question," said Yablans. "Because the warden is a bad guy." Then Yablans paused to think. "Actually, he killed a prisoner by accident and then to cover his tracks pinned it on this guy. We never really explain that in the movie. I hope people don't take the trouble to ask, because it's really not that important." □

## BOXOFFICE SURVEY: 1ST HALF REBOUNDS, FIRST INCREASE SINCE 1984

An analysis of the 50 Top Grossing Films, as reported weekly by *Variety*, reveals that in the first 26 weeks of 1987 grosses from horror, fantasy, and science fiction films were up 24.9% over 1986, the first such increase since 1984. Film revenue in general rose a mere 3.6% over last year's total.

Of the 219 titles that comprised the weekly listings (230 last year), 58 or 26.5% were genre titles, accounting for 27.3% of the total boxoffice (36.9% in 1984, before the genre boxoffice began to ebb). There were 12 science fiction films (26 last

year), 5.5% of all films and 6.8% of total boxoffice revenue; 21 fantasy films (30 last year), 9.6% of all films and 11.1% of revenue; and 25 horror films (25 last year), 11.4% of all films and 9.3% of the total boxoffice.

As at the end of last year's first half, genre film revenue is fairly evenly distributed between the top money makers, with no one film far out-grossing the field, as was the trend in earlier years when George Lucas and Steven Spielberg were in top form. Two Spielberg pictures this year, INnersPACE and HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS,

have earned less than expected.

Top-grossing genre films in the *Variety* totals are listed at right (through 9/2). For purposes of breakdown by genre, titles are indicated as horror (h), fantasy (f), and science fiction (sf), followed by the number of weeks each title made it into the Top 50 listings since January. The totals do not include figures from previous years for reissues or films (\*) first released in 1986. The dollar amounts listed represent only a small, scientific sample of a film's total earnings (about one fourth of a film's domestic gross). □

### TOP GENRE FILMS OF '87

THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK (f, 11)	\$19,234,571
ROBOCOP (sf, 6)	\$14,201,891
PREDATOR (sf, 10)	\$13,042,736
NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART III (h, 13)	\$12,859,310
THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS (sf, 4)	\$12,531,050
SPACEBALLS (sf, 8)	\$10,897,384
• STAR TREK IV: THE VOYAGE HOME (sf, 14)	\$ 8,902,375
• THE GOLDEN CHILD (f, 11)	\$ 8,845,607
THE LOST BOYS (h, 4)	\$ 7,842,938
SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS (f, 6)	\$ 7,479,653
• LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (f, 12)	\$ 7,355,416
MANNEQUIN (f, 11)	\$ 6,843,404
ANGEL HEART (h, 15)	\$ 6,700,219
INNERSPACE (sf, 8)	\$ 6,561,348

# Batteries Not Included

Cute, anthropomorphic flying saucers star in Spielberg's next heartwarmer.

By Frederick S. Clarke

Remember AMAZING STORIES? How'd you like to pay \$5 to watch an episode that was padded out to 90 minutes? That's BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED, which originated as a half-hour TV script written by Steven Spielberg for the series. Five writers later the story is now a big-budget, effects laden feature which Universal Pictures releases December 18. Universal isn't likely to play up the connection with Spielberg's defunct TV series, which most viewers wouldn't tune in for free.

BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED is the story of cute little anthropomorphic flying saucers that brighten the lives of a group of New York City slum dwellers who watch hopelessly as the tenement building where they live faces the wrecker's ball of urban renewal. The film is directed by Matthew Robbins, who made DRAGONSLAYER, and stars the husband and wife team of

The tenants watch the birth of the baby saucers (l to r). Jessica Tandy, ex-prize fighter Frank McCrae, pregnant Elizabeth Pena, Hume Cronyn and struggling artist Dennis Boutsikaris, hooks for the special effects.

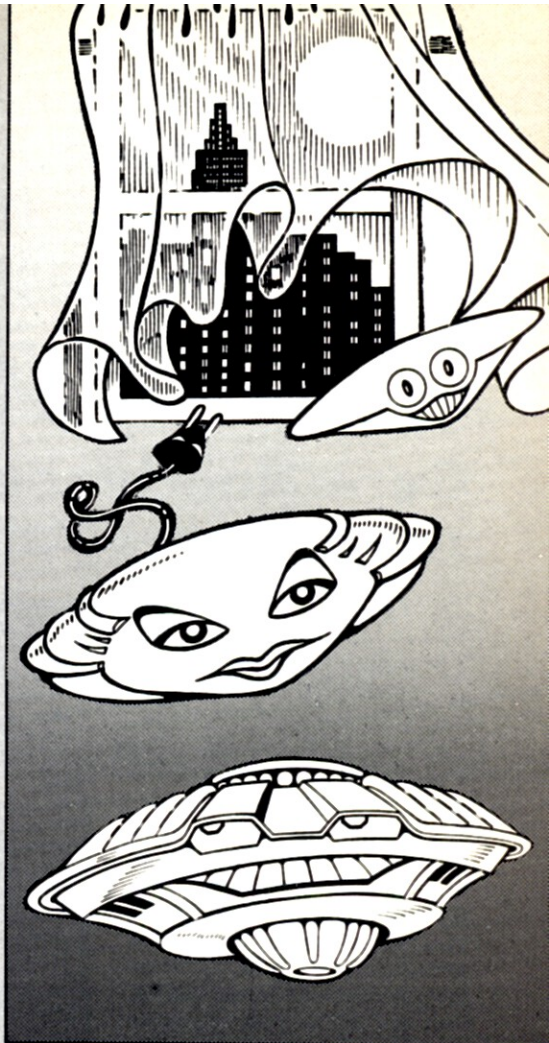


COCOON, Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy. Said a source who worked on the production, "The main problem with the picture was to have it outgrow its television roots."

The script for BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED is credited to Brad Bird, director Matthew Robbins, Brent Maddock, and S. S. Wilson, from a story by Mick Garris. According to Garris, who is currently writing FLY II for Mel Brooks and producer Stuart Cornfield, his "story by" credit was decided by the Writers Guild. Garris, who was story editor on AMAZING STORIES, actually wrote the first two drafts of the film's script, based on Spielberg's TV script. "It would have made a wonderful episode," said Garris. "But Steven decided to scrap the show and develop it as a feature." Though the episode never began production, Carlo Rambaldi protegee Isidoro Raponi, who built BABY for Walt Disney, constructed the saucer models for filming (models for the feature, however, have been built by Greg Jein).

To bring BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED to the big screen, Spielberg brought in long-time collaborator Matthew Robbins, who wrote the screenplay for Spielberg's first feature THE SUGARLAND EXPRESS (1974). Robbins worked with writing partner Brad Bird to further revamp the screenplay. Brent Maddock and S. S. Wilson, the screenwriters of SHORT CIRCUIT, director John Badham's cute robot movie, were called in to produce the final shooting script.

The result, dubbed by Pat H. Broeske of the *L. A. Times* as "100000 cute for words" is quintessentially Spielberg, following the pat, sentimentally sweet formula that Spielberg has made his own. Like childhood toys come to life, Ma and Pa saucer fly in the window of Cronyn and Tandy's tenement apartment one night, out of the blue, and take up residence in a roof-top pidgeon coop, which they turn into a love nest. The film's title stems from the resulting birth of three baby saucers which are



Ma, Pa, and baby saucer fly in the window of a condemned New York City tenement to cheer up the glum boarders in BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED.

even cuter than mom and pop. As the slum dwellers gather round to watch the happy event, the last of the saucer babies is born dead. Harry, one of the tenants, a big, seemingly mute ex-prize fighter played by Frank McCrae, breaks the silence by saying "Batteries not included." Of course, the baby doesn't stay dead. True to the emotionally manipulative Spielberg formula, Harry has it repaired in no time, and it becomes his pet, the cutest of the lot.

In E.T. Spielberg turned the same kind of material into the biggest boxoffice hit of all time, earning over \$228 million. But director Matthew Robbins is said by a source on the production to be "trying to underplay the cuteness and steer away from knee jerk emotional responses." Uppermost in the minds of distributor Universal and the filmmakers at Amblin, Spielberg's company, must be the cool reception given to HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS, their collaboration last summer (see page 44). Coming on the heels of the ratings flop of Spielberg's AMAZING STORIES (the show finished 62nd out of 104 network series its first year, and was cancelled by NBC this year) the public seems to be turning away from Spielberg's brand of treacly sentimentality.

Looming large in any success the picture

continued on page 59

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS KINSINGER

# STAR TREK

## THE NEXT GENERATION

### Gene Roddenberry's new series premieres amid rumors of script problems and production delays.

By Dennis Fischer

Visual science fiction has always been known for its high production costs. STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION is no exception. Costs for the series, which premiered on syndicated stations at the end of September, are estimated at \$1.2 to \$1.5 million per episode, making it the most expensive series ever created for television, next to the similarly budgeted MAX HEADROOM. Series creator and executive producer Gene Roddenberry is reputed to have nixed a network launch for the new show to avoid censorship, a sore point on the original series.

As the show went into production this past summer, rumors circulated that the series was having trouble getting satisfactory scripts. (In order to limit the number of submissions from enthusiastic but unprofessional fans of the original show, which has spawned a legion of fan-written fiction and a series of novels from Pocket Books, the producers ruled that they would look at scripts from professional writers only who had sold to television in the last three years and had submitted material through an accredited agent only.) Feuling speculation was the departure from the series of story editor David Gerrold. Though Gerrold declined to comment on his involvement with the series, a spokesperson revealed that Gerrold has alerted the Writer's Guild about alleged "irregularities" involving his employment on the show. Story editor D.C. Fontana also declined through a spokesman to comment on



Security chief Tasha Yar (Denise Crosby) engages in some hand-to-hand combat in the series' two-hour pilot "Encounter at Farpoint," which premiered in September.

the show, and publicists for the series denied access to Roddenberry, his co-producers or any of the writing staff for comment, though a highly structured on-set visit for interviews with the cast was arranged.

The trouble with scripts is said to have slowed production and there is some question whether the show may have to repeat episodes to fill air dates before all of the proposed 26 hours have been telecast. A spokesman for producer Paramount Pictures denied that

there were problems, but as of an August 6th visit to the set only four episodes had been filmed, including the two-hour pilot, after close to ten weeks of production. If filming at that rate continues, the show will run out of new episodes in early February, long before season's end.

SF illustrator Rick Sternbach, a designer for the series working for production designer Herman Zimmerman, seemed puzzled by the negative rumors when approached for

comment on the set. "All the craftsmen are putting their guts into it," he said. "The actors, everyone, are working together very well." On the subject of script problems Sternbach said, "We have been told the same thing happened 20 years ago, that it was difficult to get really dynamite stories at the beginning, but as the steam picked up, more stories came in. I don't know. I can't see things from the production office side because we are here in the art department designing and I don't know exactly what the script flow is right now. We are getting stories, we have a schedule, we're shooting, we're designing it, so there's no slowing down here."

Indeed, if the scripts have been bad or if the actors have been sidelined in their dressing rooms due to rumored snafus in production, no one among the cast gave an inkling of such problems. On the contrary, the actors were uniformly upbeat and positive about their work on the series, not surprising for an organized publicity junket.

"It's grand," said English actor Patrick Stewart who plays Captain Jean-Luc Picard. "There is a freshness about each one and that's the best thing that we can look for. Also, there's a true sense—in the very ancient sense of the word—of storytelling. That's first and foremost what we have to do. Before we buckle ourselves in special effects or characters or who we are, we have to tell a good story. If you do that, people will stay."

Though story editor David Gerrold has left the show, some of his complaints about the original series as expressed in



The latest model of the starship Enterprise, designed by Andrew Probert, based on the original designs of Walter M. "Matt" Jeffries, and filmed by ILM.

his book *The World of Star Trek* has led to some rethinking on STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, including the idea that a captain should not beam down with an initial landing party. Why take the most experienced officer on the Enterprise, the man responsible for the entire ship's operation, and continually send him down into the most dangerous and occasionally potentially lethal situations, reasoned Gerrold. Hence, Picard will often send his exec, Number One, to lead the way and check things out first,

though according to Stewart, "There's no pattern to that. So far in four stories, I have been on alien locations twice."

One of the aims Roddenberry had in doing the new series was to de-emphasize the military tone the recent movies have taken (partly derived from movie producer Harve Bennett's own naval background). In STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION officers are not saluted nor are they addressed as "sir." Stewart felt that with regard to the military aspect, "there had been a shift away from the orig-

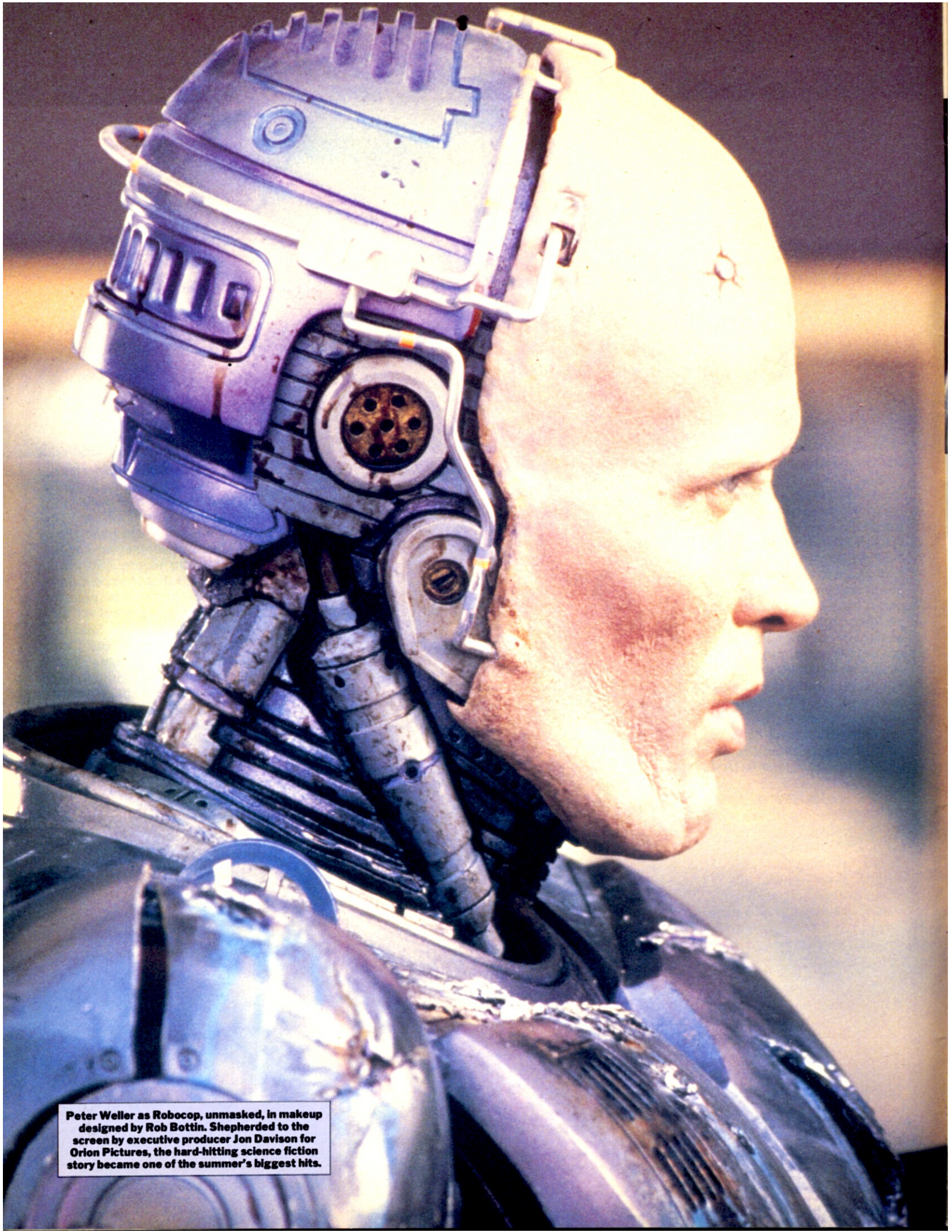
inal STAR TREK, and I think we are closer to that here now." Stewart considers all actors to be "living" in a world of make believe, so science fiction holds no special challenges for him. Mostly, he's looking forward "to seeing so much of the stuff which, at the moment, we are only imagining, on the screen."

One of the important aspects of the new series is that with missions of longer duration, everyone is accorded comfortable and personable living quarters which reflect the personality of each inhabitant. Picard's quarters contain "un-

der a glass case what looks like a 19th century folio edition of the complete works of Shakespeare, and someone keeps turning the pages," Stewart observed with a smile, curious whether anyone had anticipated his background as an actor with the Royal Shakespeare Company and included the prop as an homage. "With each episode we've done, it's open to a different page, and in the first two episodes, I actually quote from it. Picard's a very literate man, and I think that's good. It keeps adding to the imaginative elements." □

The bridge of the new Enterprise, at the helm (left) blind Lt. J. G. Geordi La Forge (LeVar Burton) and Klingon Lt. Worf (Michael Dorn).





**Peter Weller as RoboCop, unmasked, in makeup designed by Rob Bottin. Shepherded to the screen by executive producer Jon Davison for Orion Pictures, the hard-hitting science fiction story became one of the summer's biggest hits.**



# ROBOCOP

## A look behind-the-scenes, filming Dutch director Paul Verhoeven's science fiction film noir.

By Dan Bates

It is about 11 p.m., Wednesday, September 17, 1986. We are in the underground parking garage of The Crescent, a mammoth, ritzy shopping mall—a sort of Texas microcosm, one might say, of Beverly Hills's famed Rodeo Drive—built within the last two years in close proximity to the downtown Dallas area. About forty actors—foremost among them Peter Weller, the star of *ROBOCOP*, and seventy or eighty technicians man the location for filming. The setting seems about as claustrophobic as a World War II German U-boat, which makes all the more apt Jost Vacano's presence as *director of photography*. Vacano, working on his second American film, shot Wolfgang Petersen's 1980 *DAS BOOT*, set aboard a submarine. Tonight the film's central character will be "nailed," so to speak, by a forty-person SWAT team.

What will eventually encompass a mere two or three minutes of screen time takes almost that much time in cumulative hours to set up and photograph. Five or six cameras are used on each take, for two reasons: so that, after numerous rehearsals, the shots can be obtained on the first take—in the grand tradition of John Ford, who was, perhaps, the all-time master of filmmaking economy—so that there will be sufficient celluloid grist for the editing table, hopefully making the ultimate viewing experience for the audience quite literally *in the round*. (This is directly counter to the film's second unit, which was witnessed shooting and reshooting a simple sequence of Weller's stuntman, Russell Towery, going up in an elevator, in downtown Dallas's Plaza of the Americas, with as many as eight takes, employing two cameras, before satisfaction was achieved.)

Dutch director Paul Verhoeven, making his American film debut,



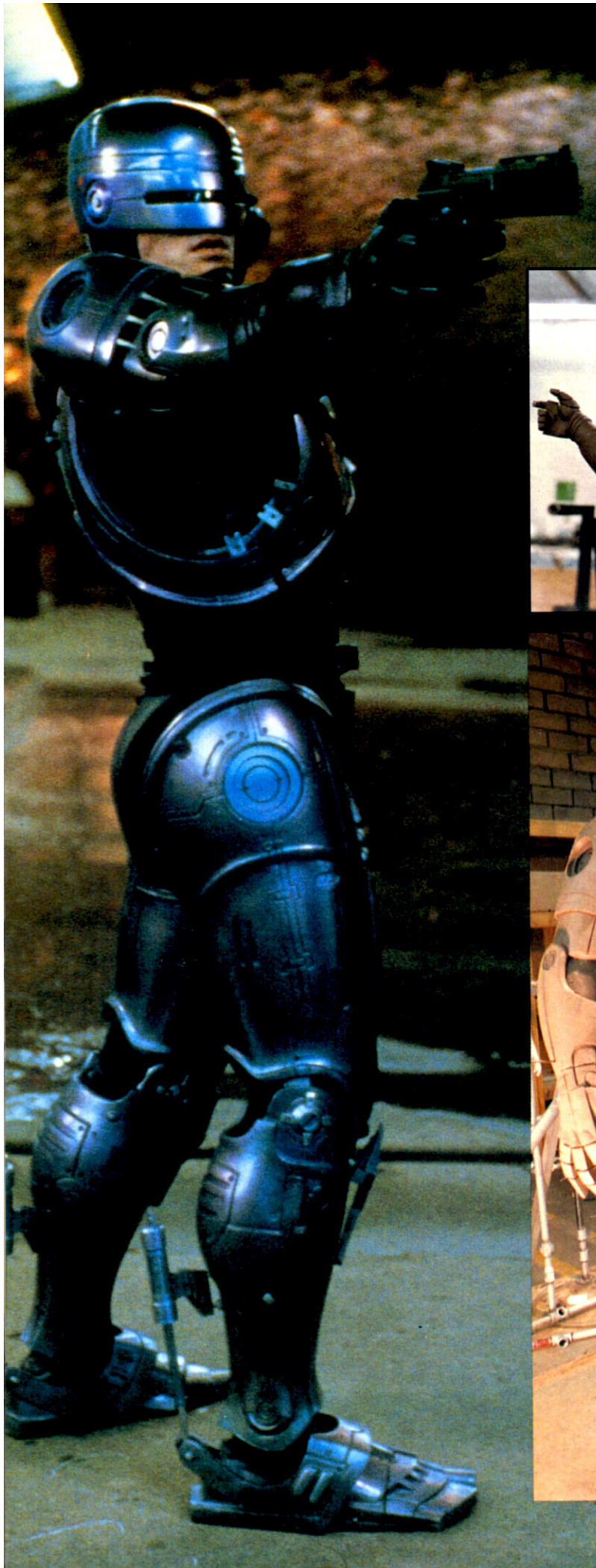
Dutch director Paul Verhoeven, shooting *Robocop*'s showdown with crime overlord Clarence, filmed at a steel mill in Pittsburgh.

walks, crawls, and drags Weller's character through the shot for what seems like an hour before the cameras actually roll. In rehearsal Verhoeven assumes both the stance and the slow-motion-like bodily rhythms of Robo (as he is referred to by cast and crew) executing a slow-turn, almost a slow-motion pirouette, and attempts to stalk away, only to be brought to a crawl when the SWAT-team starts firing. Then Verhoeven is down on one knee, dragging himself along, the SWAT-team blasting away all the while, until he hurls himself under the crane-mounted camera, and out of the shot.

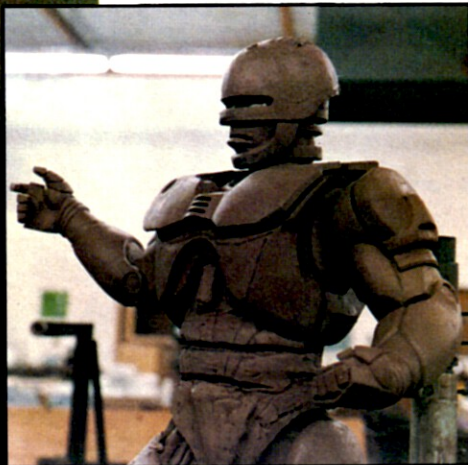
A lady crew member hands out little styrofoam inserts to put in our ears. "Almost everyone of those guys are firing a weapon of some sort," she said. "It just echoes back and forth, everywhere!" The acoustics in the underground garage make the filming bloody deafening, even with the styrofoam. No mere Dolby system could approximate such a monumental cacophony! Like the Vegas comics say, you really had to be there!

Though *ROBOCOP* is set in Detroit, in the future, the filmmakers chose to shoot the picture in Dallas and Pittsburgh, largely for budgetary reasons because Detroit is a union town. "We started out at \$7 million, non-union," said co-scripter and co-producer Ed Neumeier. "This was meant to be a non-union picture. Producer Jon Davison and I felt that movies were becoming wasteful. This movie at a major studio could easily have cost \$28 million! The first thing Davison said to me was, nobody needs a \$25 million *ROBOCOP*!" The film eventually came in at \$12 million.

Neumeier conceived *ROBOCOP* with writing partner Michael Miner, and the property is their first produced screenplay. The project came out of Neumeier's interest in sophisti-



**SCULPTING ROBOCOP** became an endless chore for designer Rob Bottin once director Paul Verhoeven came onto the project. Two of Bottin's sculptures (below) indicate some design variations that led to the final concept, (left). The suit, made of urethane, foam rubber, and fiberglass, weighed 25 pounds and confined Peter Weller inside in temperatures up to 115 degrees. Weller lost 2 pounds of water weight daily during filming.



cated, adult comic books. Miner, Neumeier's writing partner, was a UCLA Film School grad who collaborated with director Alex Cox, then a fellow student, on *EDGE CITY*, Cox's first film. Miner also assisted Cox on the development of the futuristic *REPO MAN*. He is currently making his directing debut on *DEADLY WEAPON* for Empire, based on his script about a teenager who discovers a ray gun.

**B**eing set up is a shot that's taken "nearly forever" to rig. But Verhoeven is at last satisfied and ready to film. The underground garage's ventilation system is silenced. The lights are turned down so that SWAT team floodlights glare through the manmade smoke filling the shot's perimeters, becoming the main source of illumination. Three cameras—one on a moderately high crane, and two at floor level covered by mattresses—prepare to capture the action about to take place.

"This has been an arduous shoot, so far, but it's looking very good," Neumeier noted. "It's just so complicated. Everytime you get a shot with automatic weapons firing, all at the same moment, and then one doesn't fire properly, or something else goes wrong, it just seems to go on forever!"

Verhoeven shouts, "Are all the cameras ready?" An assistant director replies that they are. He then shouts, "Ready... Action!" The shot is "slated," and, as Weller, costumed as *ROBOCOP*, crawls slowly toward the cameras, dragging one leg, the SWAT-team converges, laying on an incessant barrage of shots lasting, in reality, some twenty seconds, but seeming longer. Weller gets to the cameras and hurls himself beyond them (and over a parapet—to be accomplished in the night's second shot). Verhoeven shouts, "And cut!" And everyone suddenly bursts into spontaneous applause.

The crane is rolled away, and the cameras are set up for the night's second shot, 200 yards away, with Russell Towery vaulting over the parapet, and

# ROBOCOP

## THE MAKING OF ROBOCOP

*Oscar-nominee Rob Bottin designed and built the fiberglass and urethane suit that transformed actor Peter Weller.*

**By Dan Bates**

Executive producer Jon Davison selected Rob Bottin to come up with the robot suit for ROBOCOP. Bottin, nominated for an Oscar this year for his work on LEGEND, had worked for Davison on PIRANHA and TWILIGHT ZONE—THE MOVIE. Bottin began his design work on the suit before director Paul Verhoeven was hired, watching STAR WARS to study the design of C-3PO. Bottin, a comic book fan, decided to give ROBOCOP the kind of heroic physique seen in Marvel Comics superheroes.

"It's meant to look very speedy and aerodynamic," said Bottin, who spent ten months designing the suit out of his studio in Azusa, California. "All the lines are measured to go on a slant—forward, forward, forward! All the lines were geometric, and complement every shape on the body from all angles."

When Verhoeven came on

Stuntman Russell Towery and Peter Weller rehearsed intensely after the costume arrived late on location.



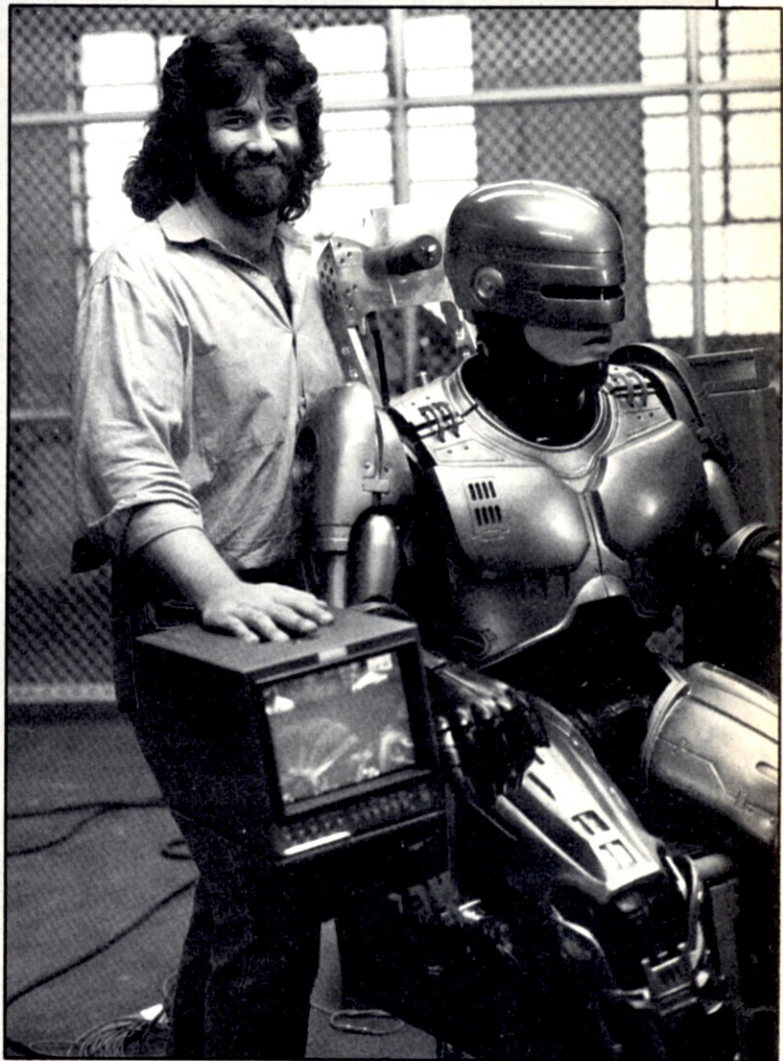
the project he requested numerous design changes, additions to the suit which looked more machine than man-like. Said Bottin, "I've never done so many conceptional drawings for a director in my entire life—changing it, and changing it, and changing it!" Bottin sculpted numerous variations to determine the practicality of Verhoeven's suggestions only to end up with a design close to his original heroic concept. "Robocop looks the way he does because that's the way a *man's* body works!" said Bottin. "Although we went through fifty different variations, developing his character, everything came back to *man-like*."

ROBOCOP's costume, Bottin said is "made out of eurythene, and is very similar to a hockey helmet." Bottin made the helmet out of fiberglass in deference to actor Peter Weller who wears it, because the eurythene smelled bad.

The chest portion, upper arms and lower arms are hinged mechanically with bearing joints. A ring bridges the gloves, which are foam latex, to the upper arms, made of acrylic tubing turned on a lathe, and painted black.

"The midsection in the back and the butt, and the pelvic area, is all made out of foam latex, as well as the jaw piece," said Bottin. "We run them at a very low density, so it isn't a very porous foam rubber and it's very tough. The legs and knees and the feet are all made out of eurythene, and all mechanically joined with bearings and aluminum hinges. Everything is supported by an internal harness, which is a series of hooks and snaps that hold all the extremities up onto the body. The throat piece is all made out of foam rubber, and painted black, to look like cast iron."

The suit took six months for Bottin and a crew of six to construct and arrived at the



Makeup designer Rob Bottin on location with Robocop during filming.

Dallas locations of ROBOCOP late, a cause for concern when it took actor Peter Weller and Verhoeven additional time to develop a movement style for the heavy, cumbersome and uncomfortable makeup. Makeup artist Stephan Dupuis initially took ten hours to suit Weller and his stuntman Russell Towery in the costume, but eventually got the application time down to just two hours.

Despite budget limitations which made his task difficult,

the makeup artist was high on working with Verhoeven. Said Bottin, "I felt this guy's so clever, maybe he's going to show me something I hadn't thought of."

Bottin's main concern was that audiences might dismiss Robocop as just a man-in-a-suit. "It's definitely a guy in a suit, which doesn't belittle it any," said Bottin. "I like THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. It's one of my favorite pictures." □

# ROBOCOP

## PRODUCER JON DAVISON

*Davison assembled the creative elements and nursed the project 2½ years to the screen.*

By C. V. Drake

ROBOCOP executive producer Jon Davison attended New York University's Film School, where he studied under Martin Scorsese. When NYU classmate Jonathan Kaplan directed NIGHT CALL NURSES for exploitation master Roger Corman, Davison was lured west to rewrite the script. That led to a post as director of national advertising and publicity at Corman's New World Pictures, where he ran a department consisting solely of himself.

In the mid-'70s, Corman offered Davison the chance to produce a film. The catch was that he had to do it for half the cost of the cheapest film New World had done while Davison was there. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD (1976), directed by Joe Dante and Alan Arkush and costing \$58,000 was the result. The low budget was achieved by utilizing stock footage from earlier New World Pictures. "We could have done it for less if Roger hadn't insisted on an answer print," laughed Davison. The film has become a cult favorite.

In 1977 Davison produced Ron Howard's first film as a director, GRAND THEFT AUTO. That same year Davison was made Head of Production for New World. In 1978 Davison produced PIRANHA for New World with Joe Dante directing. It became New World's most successful film. One of Davison's major credits is often overlooked. He was Second Unit Director on New World's ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL (1979).

Davison left New World in 1980 and produced AIR-



Executive producer Jon Davison (left), matte artist Rocco Gioffre and Peter Weller, on location in Dallas.

PLANE! for Paramount, with a zany threesome (Jerry and David Zuker and Jim Abrahams) directing from their own script. Bringing the film in on its \$3 million budget was a challenge. Davison succeeded and the film was tremendously profitable.

Paramount then contractually forced Davison to produce WHITE DOG, a project about an animal trained to attack blacks. He was less than enthusiastic. ("Worst idea I ever heard of for a picture," he said.) But Davison managed to hire cult director Sam Fuller to write and direct the picture. The result was far better than could reasonably have been expected from the source material.

Davison was co-producer of Joe Dante's "It's a Good Life" segment of TWILIGHT ZONE THE MOVIE (1983)

and is credited with producing the George Miller episode. ("I don't know why they gave me the credit," laughed Davison, who said he had nothing to do with Miller's episode. "Maybe for beating him regularly on Spielberg's video games.")

In 1984 Davison worked with the Zuckers and Abrahams again on TOP SECRET!, featuring actor Peter Cushing. The production didn't catch on as well as their previous collaboration.

On ROBOCOP, Davison worked with material he developed for Orion. It took two and a half years for the project to reach the screen after his friend Jonathan Kaplan sent him the screenplay. Kaplan went off to direct PROJECT X, and Davison was left with the task of finding a director with enough talent to realize the project.

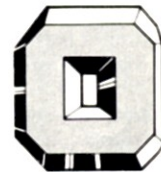
Davison named his production company Tobor Productions in tribute to the "late, great director Lee 'Roll 'Em Sholem," whose TOBOR THE GREAT was, Davison insists, "the best robot movie ever shot in five days." A one-sheet of TOBOR THE GREAT dominates his office entranceway.

Davison's earliest recollection of robots was "sitting in front of a television set at four years old watching a local Philadelphia show with Bill Weber called MR. RIVETS. "It was a man in a cardboard box painted silver. Now, hopefully we've done a little better than that." His favorite robots include Maria from METROPOLIS and Robby who had a guest appearance in HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD. □

hopefully landing on an inflatable mattress out of the line of vision. Five cameras are rolling simultaneously.

While Weller stands out of camera range observing, Verhoeven waits patiently for his assistant directors to "choreograph" the movements of the SWAT-team, who in this second shot, will close in on ROBOCOP, and continue firing down on him after he has jumped over the balustrade. Here, for once at least, Verhoeven seems to have curbed his natural instincts to jump in and direct everything himself.

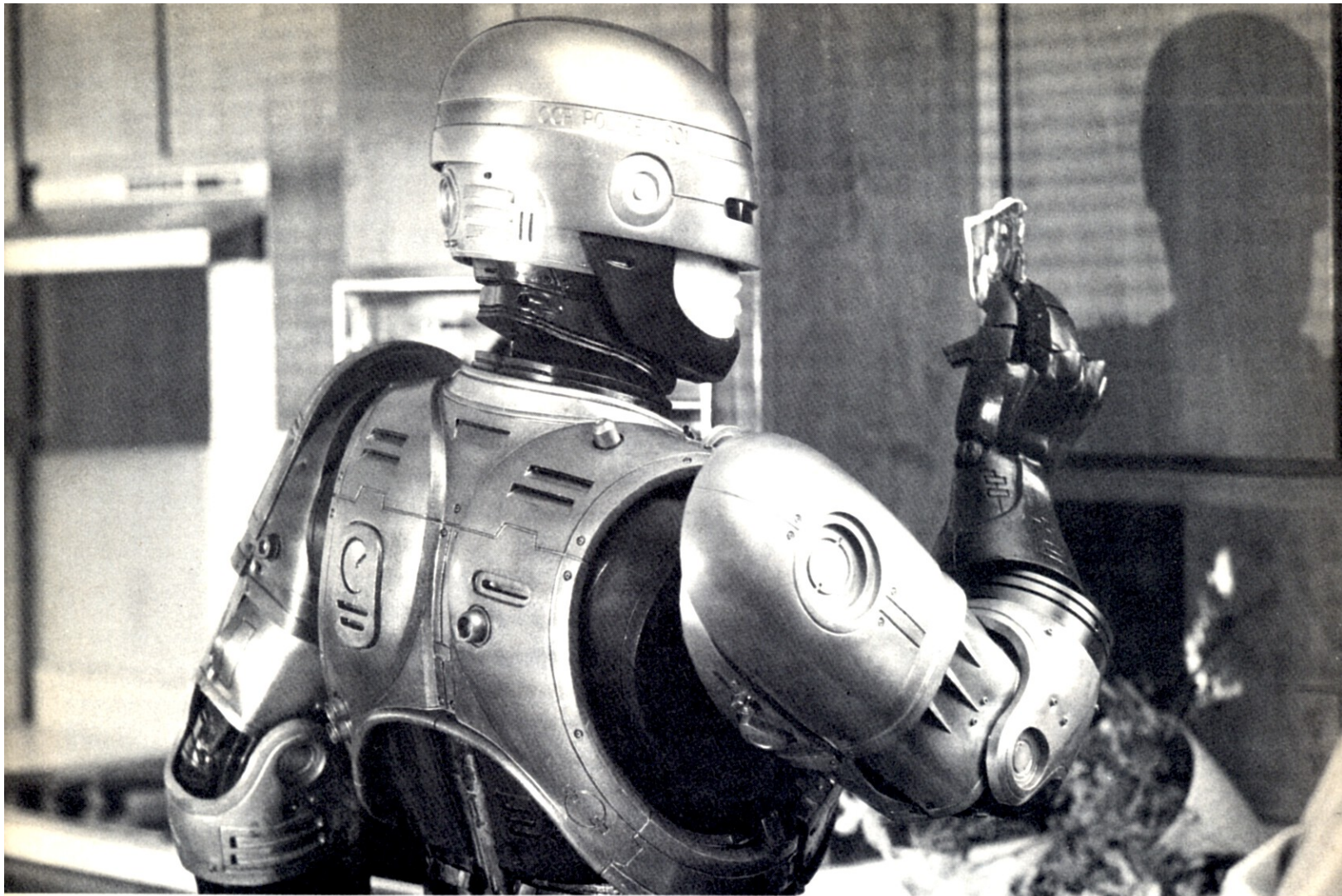
Verhoeven is tired because the past few evenings' shoots have been inordinately complex, and physically wearying. The shot goes well on the first take, and this writer goes home to bed. It is about 1:30 a.m. The film crew will be at this location until about 6 a.m. the following morning.



Opposite Peter Weller in the title role, the cast of ROBOCOP includes nemesis Ronny Cox, cast

against type as the film's main villain. Cox, who got his start in John Boorman's DELIVERANCE along with his longtime friend Ned Beatty, said that playing ROBOCOP's primary heavy as an atypical villain, seemingly a rational human being "makes it twice as scary. I've always played Mr. Boy Scout," he added, delighted with the change-of-pace.

Comparing working with Boorman and Verhoeven from an actor's perspective, Cox noted "Boorman likes to have the feeling of almost improvising everything. This film, of course, is technically oriented, very closely orchestrated. You literally rehearse it with Verhoeven enough times that, by the time the camera rolls, everything is pretty well locked-in. Sometimes it takes twenty rehearsals to get every little move down. Verhoeven doesn't do a big master shot, and then come in and do the coverage. Every shot, every angle, is different. Very seldom does he use a close-up. They're always wonderful camera angles. And you build the scene as you go along."



Robocop remembers: one of the film's most poignant and emotion-laden scenes. On a tip from Nancy Allen, Robocop finds his house and a picture of his former family.

Cox added that Verhoeven is "a wonderful actor's director. Even little scenes that seem initially not much become special for you. I've been surprised every time in this film. It really is a joy! To me, it's like getting to sit in on super graduate seminars. I'm about to direct a film for the first time, and seeing just his visual concepts of things—the way he moves that camera—it's a

continuing education!"

Members of the press got a better view of Verhoeven at work Thursday and Friday, September 25 and 26, as we witness a four-page sequence shot in a mock-up conference room of The Big Corporation on the fifty-sixth floor of the yet-to-be-completed Renaissance Tower in downtown Dallas. The scene to be filmed is approximately seven min-

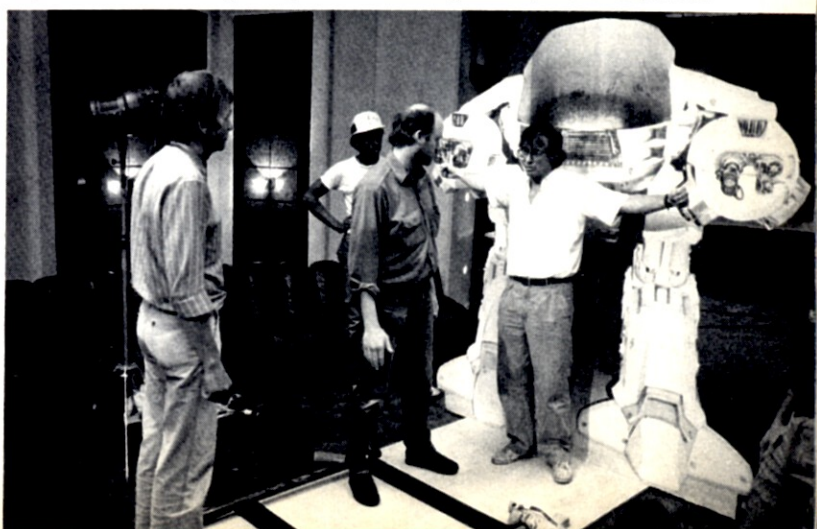
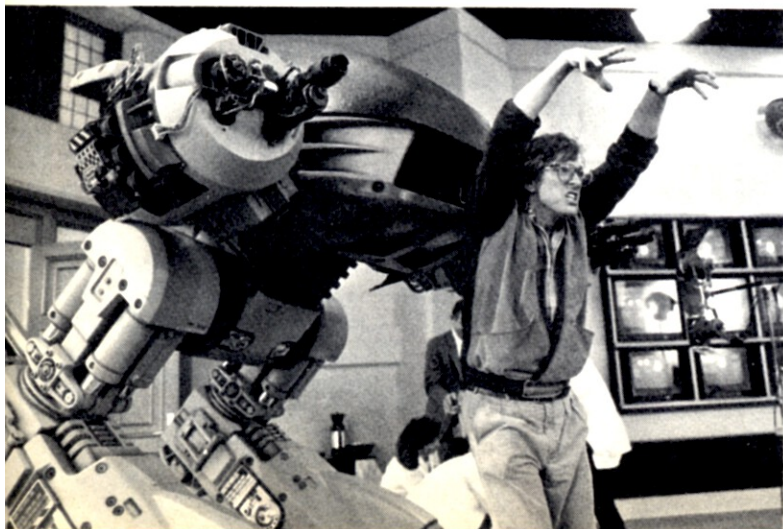
utes into the film, when the first practical demonstration of police droid ED-209 results in the death of a young executive. Neumeier's inspiration for the scene stems from his own experience as an executive at Universal and his personal fantasies about what might have happened there.

Cox noted that the film's dark humor is all the more effective for being played, as

here, "dead straight. It's so absurd that it's funny. It's taking that sort of mentality and turning it that one extra turn, which is always the best satire."

Said scriptwriter Neumeier of the film's black comedy, "You have to make it so that it's not too grueling—you use a laugh to let off the tension. I think that makes it okay for an audience, assuming they're intelligent. The idea here has

Directing ED-209: Paul Verhoeven acts the role of the police droid for cast and crew during rehearsal, next to the full-scale motionless prop (left) built by Craig Davies, and using a cardboard cut-out (right) with effects supervisor Phil Tippett, during shooting of a VistaVision background plate for one of Tippett's stop-motion sequences.



# ROBOCOP

## A CYBERPUNK FUTURE

*The film's dark vision is on the cutting edge of science fiction's high tech new wave.*

By Brooks Landon

Whether called cyborgs, androids, or replicants, artificial approximations of human life have long been a staple of SF film. In recent years, movies as strikingly different as ALIEN, BLADE RUNNER, ANDROID, THE TERMINATOR, D.A.R.Y.L., GALAXINA, and ALIENS have suggested that the differences between "natural" human life and artificial life are small indeed, that a synthetic being can and will develop its "humanity" just as readily as humans embrace bionic parts and prosthetics.

ROBOCOP continues this tradition, but takes it in a new direction, presenting the artificial life form not as better or worse or essentially the same as human, but as different—challenging audiences to consider the strangeness of this new life form rather than its familiarity. And, in this respect, ROBOCOP clearly aligns itself with one of the central concerns of a new wave of SF writing known as cyberpunk (see page 27).

A major source of ROBOCOP's appeal is that it refuses to sentimentalize the future, presenting technological advance as neither good nor bad, just inevitable. Like much Cyberpunk fiction, this film assumes that high tech cannot change human nature, but will inexorably radicalize our understanding of what it means to be human. Although its production was not associated with either cyberpunk writers or writing, ROBOCOP's stylish blend of hip technology and dark humor presents a distinctly cyber-



Self-discovery: officer Lewis (Nancy Allen) picks up a twisted piece of metal in their warehouse hideout so Robocop can look at himself after removing his visor.

punkish future.

His eyes hidden behind a dark visor, Robocop, the cyborged creation made in part from the remains of a murdered policeman, represents a new kind of life born in the interface between humanity and hightech. A programmed artificial intelligence built from a human mind supposedly stripped of its memories, Robocop represents state-of-the-art opportunism, a cheaper and quicker alternative to the completely robotic ED-209. More important, the corporate project that creates Robocop is not just an updated SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN, a noble effort to use medical technology to save and augment human life, but a cynical and greedy exploitation of human tragedy.

What takes a while to sink in is that the likeable young cop

Murphy really dies, totally flatlines. While it may be true that some of Murphy's memories and personality may resurface through the cyborg Robocop's computer programming, Robocop does not restore Murphy's life, nor does it provide him enough of a semblance of human life for him to have any hope of rejoining his wife and son.

It is in the callous exploitation of Murphy by a ruthlessly ambitious junior executive in the all-powerful Corporation that ROBOCOP displays its cyberpunk sensibility. When near the film's end, the shot up Lewis (Nancy Allen) tells Robo-Murphy (Peter Weller) that she's "a mess," he bitterly reassures her: "They can fix you. They can fix anything." That's pure cyberpunk. □

### ROBOCOP

An Orion Pictures release of a Jon Davison production. 7/87, 103 mins. In color and Dolby. Director, Paul Verhoeven. Producer, Arne Schmidt. Executive producer, Davison. Screenplay, Edward Neumeier & Michael Miner. Director of photography, Jost Vacano. Editor, Frank J. Urioste. Music, Basil Poledouris. Production designer, William Sandell. Art director, Gayle Simon. Set decorator, Robert Gould. Set designer, James Tocci. Robocop designed & created by Rob Bottin. Prosthetics applied by Stephan Dupius. ED-209 designed & created by Craig Davies & Peter Ronzani. ED-209 sequences by Phil Tippett. Special photographic effects, Peter Kuran. Special effects, Dale Martin. Optical supervision, Robert Blalack. Video sequences created by Peter Conn. 6000 SUX commercial by the Chiodo Brothers. Robocop construction, Richard White, Henry Alvarez, Gunner Ferdinansen, Tom Prosser. Art Pimetel, Vince Prentice. Costume design, Erica Edell Phillips. Head painter, John Harrington. Sound, Robert Wald. Video technician, Jeff Santlofer. Assistant director, Michele A. Panelli. Publicist, Howard Berk. Second unit director, Mark Goldblatt.

Robocop/Murphy..... Peter Weller  
Lewis..... Nancy Allen  
Jones..... Ronny Cox  
Clarence..... Kurtwood Smith  
Morton..... Miguel Ferrer  
Sgt. Reed..... Robert DoQui  
The Old Man..... Dan O'Herlihy  
Leon..... Ray Wise  
Emil..... Paul McCrane

been to keep the humor level as high as possible. Verhoeven is very comfortable with that. He has the same sort of sick sense of humor that I have! We're very, very sick people here," he laughed.



Paul Verhoeven described himself as being "47 years European and ten months American," as

of September, 1986. He took on the project because he liked "comic books, first of all, and although it's an action picture, it's still a very stylized picture.

"And, what I'm trying to do is to make it on a double level, you could call it perhaps a philosophical level. I mean, someone is losing his soul, or his body, in fact—more or less losing everything—and then realizing that part of the soul is still there. It's a very classical theme. You are thrown on Earth, even as a baby, and suppose that you start to realize that there was something before that."

While Verhoeven himself disavows any personal belief in reincarnation, what attracted him to ROBOCOP "was the 'beyond-this-life' feeling: this guy is completely robotic, and starts to realize that there was something else. Sometimes, I am half awake, and suddenly get these visions of worlds and dreams. They flash into your memory, and you try to grab them. It might just be childhood remembrances. It could also be something else. In the second 'act,' Robo starts to remember. That was for me the emotional level and the reason I wanted to do the picture.

"Science fiction for me, always has a philosophical level," continued Verhoeven. "It is a way of expressing something which you can't express otherwise. Science fiction should always be poetic. It has to do with the divine, and with God, or other levels of paradise, or other worlds that you want to believe in, that you hope would be there."

Verhoeven can be observed to be really living ROBOCOP as he directs, and he readily acknowledged he is really getting into it: "I have the feeling that I'm really mastering the problems, and that I am aware



**PAINTING THE FUTURE** was the job of matte artist Rocco Gioffre, who transformed the futuristic skyline of Dallas, Texas into that of Delta City in the year 2020, composite above, painting left. Gioffre also painted the headquarters of O.C.P. (OmniConsumer Products), views in night and day (right). The live-action location was Dallas City Hall, designed by I. M. Pei. For various views of the structure seen in the film, Gioffre painted in an additional height of seventy-five stories.



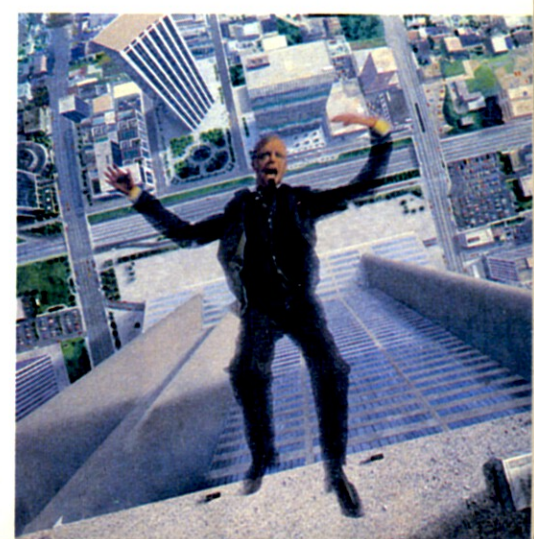
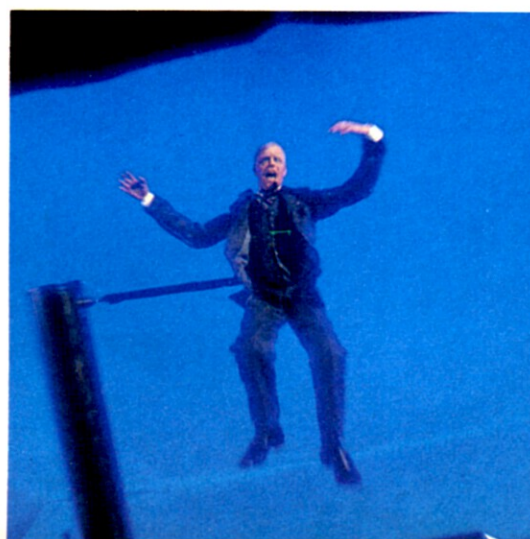
of most of the problems before I shoot them. I'd love to do a *real* science fiction film, in the sense of going to other planets, and perhaps make it a bit more realistic. But there should be something very deep inside the picture, also. I think there are even more so-called artistic possibilities here than in Europe at this moment. You can go in so many directions in this country. It's like a big sea, with

a lot of wonderful fish." But **ROBOCOP** is a commercial piece, not art-house fare, despite Verhoeven's presence. "This is essentially popcorn entertainment," Neumeier stated, "but, I hope a little social irony comes through. The most interesting thing that's happening in the middle of the picture is that Robo's beginning to remember who he is. The question I wanted to

leave with the audience is, what's left? It's a coping story, as opposed to, say, a technological nightmare like **THE TERMINATOR**. Also, I like the *chaos* of corporations. They're the kingdoms of the modern world. And it intrigued me to play with that idea, to bring that to the fore." After the SWAT team's assault at the end of the second act, **ROBOCOP** is "pretty

low," said Neumeier. "He's been betrayed by everybody and everything, and life has been rather mean to him. It's 'dark-night-of-the-soul' time. "What brings him back is someone who cares about him — Nancy Allen—and there's their relationship to be worked out. Although it never allows for the consummation which everybody wants, it, nonetheless, works on all the beats of a

Jones takes a fall: matte artist Rocco Gioffre adjusts the life-like stop-motion puppet of actor Ronny Cox (left) for the scene where the O.C.P. executive flees Robocop right out the window. Filming the puppet blue screen (center). The final composite (right), showing Gioffre's birds-eye-view as seen from the top floor of the O.C.P. building.





**FULL-SCALE ED-209** (above) was designed and built by Craig Davies and Pete Ronzani in San Rafael, California. The 7-foot tall, motionless prop, built at a cost of \$25,000, was made of fiberglass, weighed about 500 pounds and was blown up during filming.

**STOP-MOTION ED-209** (above and left) was only a foot tall and matched the full-scale prop. Shown is camera and stop-motion set-up which combines model with a Vista-View background of Ronny Cox and the Dallas location.

proper love affair."



Choosing Allen to play Peter Weller's "partner," before he is metamorphosed into Robocop was a departure from the "black lingerie" public perception of her as an actress she readily acknowledged, mostly due to her work with

former husband, Brian de Palma. As for working with Paul Verhoeven she declared, "I completely give myself to him! If he wanted me to shave my head, I'd shave my head!" Allen reiterated the perception of the other filmmakers working on the project that they are all subject to the personal vision of a poet-artist. "It's like you're part of a painting," she said. "You're

part of the brushstrokes. There is an explosion of creative juices that are always flowing!" Allen wistfully nursed a hope that there might be a relationship formed between her character and Robo, perhaps fomenting a sequel, but that was not to be: "I was kind of hoping that something would happen to my character, and she'd be turned into a little robot too," she joked.

Ed Neumeier, when informed of Nancy Allen's passing suggestion of a follow-up, winced visibly: "Oh, please! I think they use that to torture me now, and I have absolutely said 'No!' If you want to do a TV show, that's what you do, but it's really stupid! 'At Home With Robo!' 'Bringing Up Robo!'"

Neumeier acknowledged that TV's *THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN* "sort of laid the groundwork for this movie, in a cultural way. And I think the movie will be much more broadly accepted, because of that show."

Neumeier, in writing *ROBOCOP*, wanted to see how far he could depart from reality—"because that gives you something—without losing as much as you do when you go into pure fantasy. To me, this has always been set in a slightly skewed world. That's why I never would put a date on it, that's why it was always 'the future.' The future in this film is defined mostly by props, and by some nice sets, a little neon here and there, and a haircut or two. It's our world—just a little off." □

Melting man: Paul Verhoeven directs Paul McCrane as Emil, in makeup designed by Rob Bottin to suggest the effects of toxic waste. As one of the henchmen opposing Robocop, Emil crashes his vehicle into a vat of noxious liquid with these results.





# ROBOCOP

## THE MAKING OF ED-209

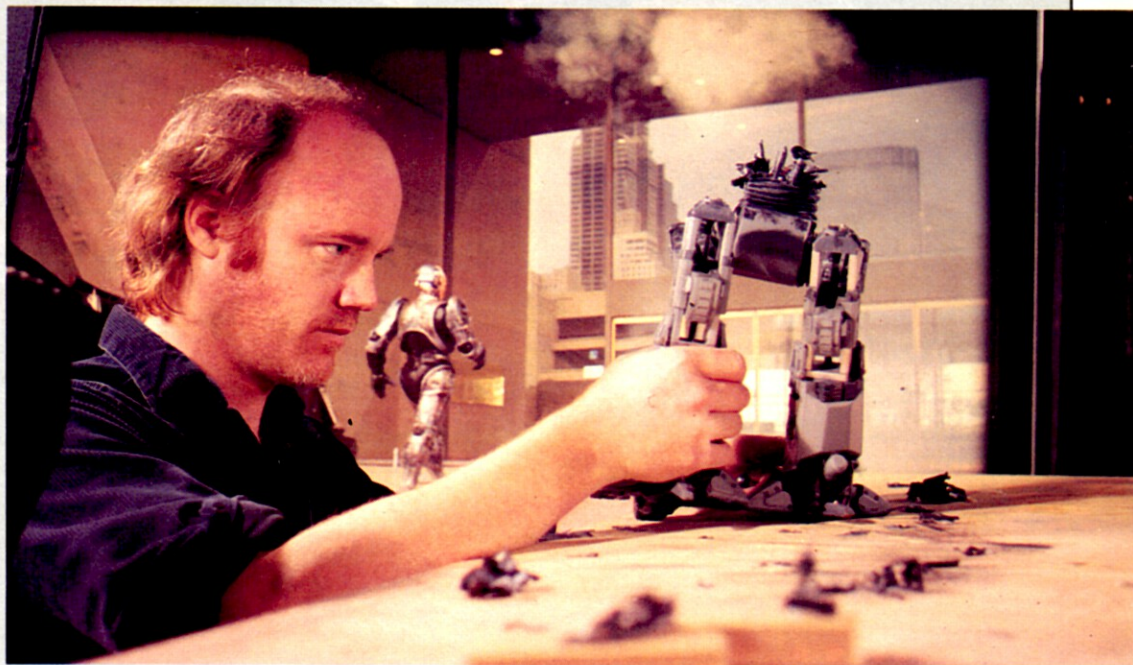
*For the robot villain, Oscar-winner Phil Tippett revived the stop-motion techniques of effects master Ray Harryhausen.*

By Dan Bates

Executive producer Jon Davison chose Phil Tippett to create police droid ED-209 for *ROBOCOP*. Tippett had worked with Davison in 1978 on the effects for *PIRANHA*. "Our interests are very similar," said Tippett. "We're both big sci-fi movie buffs. We'd always looked for a window to working together."

Tippett's concept for ED was a "deanthropomorphized" one. The robot's bumbling movements are intended to be "un-animal-like," with the creature's walking being "a process of falling and catching yourself," Tippett said. "THE TERMINATOR was a robot inside a man. The walkers in *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* were very elephantine-like. With ED, we wanted to try something that had a lethal force, like a cross between a Mack truck and a lathe, or a drill press. His movements are of the utmost simplicity and economy: he moves primarily on an X-Y axis."

Tippett won an Academy Award for his animation of the walkers in *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*, on which he helped develop ILM's sophisticated, computerized "go-motion" process. For *ROBOCOP*, Tippett reverted to the simplified stop motion techniques developed by Ray Harryhausen



Effects supervisor Phil Tippett animates the remnants of ED-209 as a victorious stop-motion Robocop strides into O.C.P.

and dubbed "Dynamation." Said Tippett, "We had about fifty shots to do on a budget that is barely adequate." Tippett did upgrade the process a bit by using VistaVision, a larger film format which provides greater clarity, truer colors, and less grain in the duping operation involved when the robot puppet is composited with the rear screen live-action plates.

Tippett's 12-inch stop-mo-

tion puppet is doubled in the film by a static, 500 pound, full-size, seven foot mock-up designed and built by Craig Davies at a cost of \$25,000. Davies took three weeks to construct the prop out of fibreglass, working out of Peter Ronzani's industrial design shop in San Rafael, California. "This is one of the best movie props I've ever seen," said Tippett. "It was Craig's enthusiasm, energy, and efforts that

did it." Davies' mock-up was actually blown up in the scene where Robocop destroys the robot.

Davies scaled down his design for two stop-motion models built for Tippett's crew, so that two stop-motion set-ups could be filmed simultaneously to meet the film's release date. The stop-motion armatures were designed by Tom St. Amand, and built by Blair Clark. "Randy Dutra, a sculptor I've worked with on *HOWARD THE DUCK* and *THE GOLDEN CHILD* did a great deal of the animation," said Tippett. "He's an excellent sculptor whom I'm starting to train as a stop-motion animator. I did the set-ups, and Randy did the lion's share of the animation." Harry Walton photographed the set-ups.

Tippett praised Paul Verhoeven as "the best director I've ever worked with," topping Joe Dante, George Lucas, Richard Marquand, and Irvin Kershner in Tippett's esteem. □



Cameraman Harry Walton lights the stop-motion set-up of ED-209 during its boardroom demonstration. The final composite is shown below.





**MAX HEADROOM**, which returns as a regular series on ABC in September, is a quintessential example of cyberpunk. Video news reporter Edison Carter (Matt Frewer), his controller (Amanda Pays) and Carter's computer alter-ego Max Headroom work out of Network 23, one of 4000 channels competing for viewer attention in a vaguely post-apocalyptic world right out of **BLADERUNNER**.

# Cyberpunk

*Future so bright  
they gotta wear shades*

**From MAX HEADROOM to ROBOCOP, science fiction's new wave is hip and high tech.**

*By Brooks Landon*

One of the newest faces of science fiction writing wears a twisted grin beneath mirror-shade sunglasses. The face, actually a loosely bound movement of ten talented young writers, is that of "cyberpunk" and if you haven't yet heard of it, odds are you soon will. Mentioned by some as SF's version of Hollywood's "brat pack" of young stars, these writers have moved in only three or four years from the obscurity of fanzines to SF's most respected publications and honors. This newest of the new waves, a self-styled laser-knife of cutting edges, has already produced novels and stories that have terraformed the familiar landscapes of SF, producing a splash of style not seen since Harlan Ellison pioneered the SF prose belly-buster in the late sixties.

Cyberpunk writers have become familiar names in recent Hugo and Nebula Awards proceedings, firmly establishing themselves as a major presence, not just in SF, but in contemporary American fiction. You can bet that cyberpunk movies are soon to follow. Film rights to a number of cyberpunk works have already been purchased, including William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (Cabana Boy Productions) and *Burning Chrome* (HEAVY METAL producer



This Robovision point-of-view by Peter Kuran's Visual Concepts Engineering for *ROBOCOP* perfectly expresses the film's cyberpunk sensibility: Robocop replays evidence from his computer memory as he strides into O.C.P. to make an arrest.

Leonard Mogel). That Gibson received \$100,000 for the rights package to *Neuromancer* from a corporation formed exclusively for making that film suggests some of the interest in his work.

Gibson, who is currently writing the script for *ALIENS III* (see sidebar, page 31), has also collaborated with John Shirley on another script, *MACROCHIP*. Shirley himself has completed the script for *BLACK GLASS*, which he refers to as "the first real cyberpunk movie." To be produced on a low \$1.5 million budget by Mickery Films, *BLACK GLASS* is scheduled to begin shooting next November, under the direction of Charlie Atlas.

More films based on the highly visual cyberpunk style are certain to follow, and in *MAX HEADROOM* we already have an example of cyberpunk TV. In their 18-minute videotape "Hiptech and Highlit" New York cyber-video artist/musician Stuart Arbright and his partner William Barg have taken a first step toward creating cyberpunk video. This is yet another indicator that cyberpunk is at the heart of a new cultural and media convergence, bringing together writers, video artists, computer graphics experts, film and TV production, and performance art of the wildly different kinds represented by Laurie Anderson, Kate Bush, Robert Longo, and Mark

Pauline. One major implication of this high-energy convergence is that cyberpunk writing and contemporary SF film and TV already have more in common than has ever been true of relations between print and visual SF.

First of all, even if you haven't read any cyberpunk fiction, you probably know many of its features from recent SF film and TV. There is no rigid formula, but many cyberpunk stories are set in a relatively near post-industrial, multicultural future in which electronic and bio-technology have saturated all forms of experience—become an inescapable environment, a technosphere, much like that presented in *MAX HEADROOM*. It is often a hardboiled tech noir, technosleaze, retrofitted future which might have been designed by Syd Mead in a bad mood, or cobbled together from Michael Crichton's nightmares.

Cyberpunk writer William Gibson recounted that he went to see *BLADERUNNER* when he was about a third finished with the first draft of *Neuromancer*, the movement's most celebrated novel, and the film freaked him: "It looked so much like the inside of my head that I fled the theatre after about thirty minutes and have never seen the rest of it." Likewise, Rudy Rucker (*Master of Space and Time*) spoke of the



“immediate recognition” he felt when first shown MAX HEADROOM.

Cyberpunk’s literary slam dance confronts us with a fast-forward future so culturally complicated and technologically determined that no individual can do much more than survive, relatively powerless, but not particularly upset about it. Hightech, but dingy, the cyberpunk future usually is a time of electronic and medical marvels, but also of vaguely post-apocalyptic rubble. High culture—the arts—seems pretty much dead and pop culture has taken over. Interest in outer space has waned and the inner-spaces of computers and the human body have become the new frontiers and the new battlegrounds.

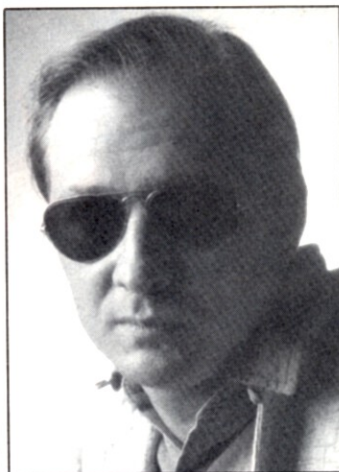
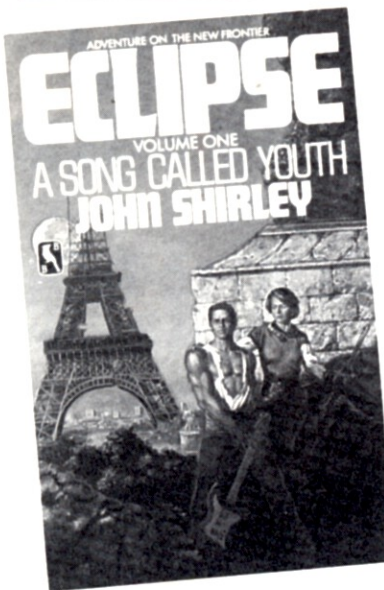
Cluttered with the litter of brand name gadgets (Gibson’s stories almost seem to *invent* the future) and marked by bizarre obsessions with fashion, this future parodies both capitalism and consumerism, as its economy seems equally divided between the smothering corporate power of multinationals and a thriving blackmarket in almost everything. Key to both economies is the manipulation or theft of information, the primary occupation of a cynically resigned counterculture of drug-dependent mercenaries and computer-hacking “cowboys”—protagonists who fit Andy Warhol’s great description of the eighties, “bored, but hyper.” Cyberpunk characters live on the fringes of society; for that matter, cyberpunk society is nothing but fringe.

If the theft of information does not drive a cyberpunk story, the nature of information often does, as story after story suggests the possibility of translating human life into electronic data, or raising data to a state approximating life (Artificial Intelligence), creating a world where Max Headroom would have lots of company, as in Rudy Rucker’s *Software*.

Perhaps the central assumption of cyberpunk is that life, like film, video, and computer data can be edited as to become “post-human,” radically reprogrammed through artificial evolution or redesigned by technology, an idea that drives

“Cyberpunk characters live on the fringes of the post-apocalypse, fitting Andy Warhol’s description of the ’80s, ‘bored but hyper.’”

— Cyberpunk Future So Bright —



Cyberpunk writer John Shirley, author of “Eclipse,” the post-holocaust tale of a high-tech, rock ‘n’ roll rebel leader.

Bruce Sterling’s “Mechanist Shaper” series of stories. Another way of explaining this is to say that the special effects “magic” of recent SF film and the manic permutations of music videos such as Peter Gabriel’s *BIG TIME*, become for the cyberpunk writers a key index to what everything will be like in the future—a time of designer drugs, designer genetics, designer surgery, designer prosthetics, even (courtesy of time travel) designer history. So strong is this notion of editing reality that John Shirley even used it to describe cyberpunk writing itself, as “more like a video process,” and as “a mirror you can edit.” Shirley stressed that he sees in the cyberpunk future “the transcendental usefulness of technology”—its potential for enhancing human life.

While the future presented in most cyberpunk stories may not be directly derived from or influenced by contemporary SF film, many of its distinctive elements have been anticipated by film and video. Imagine a future that somehow blends the assumptions of *ACLOCKWORK ORANGE*, *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK*, *MAD*

*MAX*, *TRON*, *BLADERUNNER*, *LOOKER*, *BRAZIL*, *REPO MAN*, *VIDEODROME*, *LIQUIDSKY*, *CAFE FLESH*, *MAX HEADROOM*, *OVERDRAWN AT THE MEMORY BANK*, *ANDROID*, *SCANNERS*, *RADIOACTIVE DREAMS*, *ROBOCOP* and a good portion of contemporary music videos (such as Tom Petty’s *YOU’RE JAMMING ME*), and you get the picture.

The difference is that while some of the above films lost sight of or imploded under the weight of the fascinating premises they started from, most cyberpunk writing zeroes in on its ideas with the relentless speed and impact of an Exocet missile: this new gang has staked out literary style as a big part of their turf, and they have the goods to deliver. Not content to be just another genre in SF writing, the cyberpunks seem determined both to expand SF’s cultural limits by taking its stories from the traditional geography of the United States and Europe into the third-world, and to further erode the already crumbling distinctions between mainstream and SF writing.

“The sky above the port was

the color of television, tuned to a dead channel,” begins William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*, the novel that most dramatically signalled cyberpunk’s arrival on the SF scene. In 1985 *Neuromancer* won Hugo and Nebula awards for best novel of the preceding year, as well as the Philip K. Dick award for best original paperback novel—an unprecedented sweep of three of SF writing’s top awards. That year also saw a cyberpunk panel at the North American Science Fiction Convention held in Austin, Texas, cyberpunk’s hometown. Austin, home of cyberpunk writers Lewis Shiner (*Frontera*) and Bruce Sterling (*Schismatrix*), was the site of the Turkey City Writer’s Workshop, where many of the writers in the movement became good friends, sharpening ideas and sharing energy.

One sure quality of this writing is controversy, as it immediately offended SF’s old guard as being “anti-science” and many of its most promising newer writers as being “anti-humanist.” Yet cyberpunk extends SF traditions just as surely as it challenges them, its literary roots in the writing of J. G. Ballard, Philip K. Dick, Harlan Ellison, Norman Spinrad, Alfred Bester, Brian Aldiss, Samuel Delaney, Michael Moorcock, and John Varley. In many ways a reaction against the fear of technology expressed in SF’s New Wave writers of the sixties, cyberpunk embraces technological change without suggesting that it necessarily makes life any better—just more interesting.

“Instead of drowning under the new wave of technology,” calmly noted Shiner, “we should surf on it.” Strong literary influences on cyberpunk not usually associated with SF writing would include Thomas Pynchon, William Burroughs, and Robert Stone, while Alvin Toffler’s *The Third Wave* introduced many of its concerns, particularly the rapidly accelerating Balkanization of culture into networks of subcultures, and Marilyn Ferguson’s *The Aquarian Conspiracy* suggested some of its fringe science.

This is probably the first

# MAX HEADROOM

*Quintessentially cyberpunk, it's one of the most original shows on television.*

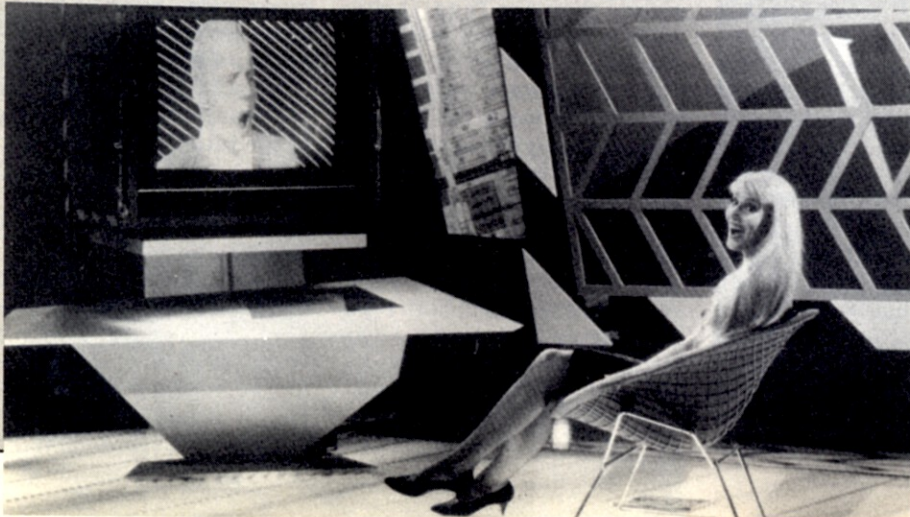
By Brooks Landon

As Max says: "There's nothing like a change of *screenery!*"

In MAX HEADROOM: 20 MINUTES INTO THE FUTURE, ABC's fall 1987 lineup will feature what may well be one of the most original shows on American television. Of course, like its computer generated star himself, MAX HEADROOM is a bit of a copy, having originally been developed for British TV's channel 4, in 1985. First dreamed up at Chrysalis Visual Programs (the music video arm of Chrysalis Records) as a host for a video awards program, Max, the ultimate talking head, was soon given a science fictional background story in a 66 minute teleplay. That story, partially recast, slightly rescripted, somewhat de-clawed, and reshot for American TV, became the first of six episodes aired by ABC last spring—and it could be the start of something big. Already known to American viewers through "his" series of video interviews shown on CINEMAX (a pairing of names made in heaven) and through a series of commercials for Coca Cola, Max was found by one poll to be recognized by 76% of U.S. teenagers. And he may soon prove irresistible to adults as well.

Very much the brainchild of Peter Wagg (MAX's version of Gene Roddenberry), a British producer who comes from the same ad agency background as Ridley Scott, MAX was developed for British TV by a small team including writers Steve Roberts and George Stone, and co-directors Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel. Morton and Jankel brought to the production their expertise in state-of-the-art computer graphics, and their fascinating book, *Creative Computer Graphics* (Cambridge, 1984) is indispensable for anyone interested in the future of special effects technology. MAX's distinctive look came very much from Wagg's sense of design and style.

Max's first U.S. stint was as host of THE ORIGINAL MAX TALKING HEADROOM SHOW on Cinemax.



The ABC/Chrysalis/Lorimar production remains under the guidance of Wagg and Roberts, although Morton and Jankel are no longer involved. For the first six American episodes a new writing team was brought over from the now defunct TWILIGHT ZONE, including Philip De Guere, a co-executive producer, who supervised the first six scripts, and writers Michael Cassutt, George R. R. Martin, James Crocker, Martin Pasko, and Rebecca Parr. Of these writers, only Cassutt remains for next season, although some of the others may do individual scripts, and some scripts are being commissioned from other outside writers such as cyberpunk author John Shirley. Farhad Mann directed the first MAX episode, the rest were directed by Tommy Lee Wallace and Thomas J. Wright (two each), and Francis Delia.

Ties between MAX HEADROOM and cyberpunk are immediate and obvious, with BLADERUNNER a strong influence in both cases. (Indeed, BLADERUNNER director Ridley Scott has also directed some of Max's commercials for Coca Cola.) "There is a link," explains MAX's executive script consultant Michael Cassutt, "I know their [the cyberpunks] work quite well, some of our writers know their work and some of our writers come from the SF community." While noting "a certain amount of feedback," however, Cassutt (who himself has solid SF credentials, including *The Star Country*, a recent novel) also chalks up many of the similarities to "parallel thinking," noting that "we're all drawing from the same sources."

As is true of many cyberpunk stories, MAX is set in a vaguely post-apocalyptic, geographically undetermined, near future where everything is connected to a media grid controlled by cut-throat multinational corporate interests. In MAX's case, the corporation is Network 23, one of 4000 TV channels competing for viewer attention,



Max Headroom's surprising tendency toward self-parody, boldly extends the tradition of NETWORK to where a talking head has never gone before.

with continuously computed ratings the network's only concern. The first episode of MAX HEADROOM grew around Network 23 reporter Edison Carter's discovery that "blipverts," a new advertising technology that compressed 30 second ads into 3 (to frustrate channel zapping) had, in some cases, the bothersome side-effect of making the viewer explode.

While somewhat inconvenienced by this news, the network decides the ads are too valuable to be pulled, noting as one executive does that only a *small* portion of their audience is really at risk. Pursued by network thugs out to silence him, Carter crashes his motorcycle into a parking ramp barrier which warns that Max (maximum) Headroom is 2.3 meters. The comatose Carter has his brain scanned by the Network's bratty 16 year-old computer genius, Bryce Lynch, who uses the data to generate a computer driven image and personality. This image, a cartoonish, video sculpted stylization of Carter's head appearing against a colorful background of wildly randomizing parallel lines, takes Carter's last memory, "Max Headroom," as its name, and soon reveals that while it shares Carter's memories, it has a life of its own—a quirky, egotistical, wisecracking, totally irreverent view of the world.

Actually a heavily made-up actor videotaped, the tape then deliberately degraded and glitched up to provide a computerized effect, the "computer animated" Max has

continued on page 58



**“We’re not going to survive this weirdest of centuries by dressing as elves. We need every mutant and nut case we can spare.”**

**— Cyberpunk writer Bruce Sterling —**

science fiction to take technology completely seriously, to realize that velcro and video games have changed our world much more than has space-flight, and to remind us that drugs and rock music are as much a part of hightech as are computers. “Cyberpunks,” pointed out Sterling, “are perhaps the first SF generation to grow up not only within the literary tradition of science fiction, but in a truly science fictional world.” Perhaps more than anyone writing today in any form or genre, the cyberpunks realize that electronic and medical technology now surrounds us, not as tools or toys, but as a new environment, an ecosystem that influences almost every aspect of our existence.

“We want to deal with what’s actually happening here and now,” explained Shiner, adding that what the movement finds particularly offensive is “the used furniture of galactic empire” in SF writing that posits a future in which mankind has not been fundamentally changed by the progress of its science and technology. One of the clear messages of cyberpunk is that drugs, whether medical or recreational, and electronics have already changed us and our understanding of the world, indeed of what it means to be human, a proposition shared with films such as *VIDEODROME*, *SCANNERS*, *BLADERUNNER*, *BRAINSTORM*, *ALTERED STATES*, and *LIQUID SKY*.

In the process of their dizzying rise to prominence, the cyberpunks have also already gone through a handful of names, including *The Movement*, the *Neuromantics*, the *Outlaw Technologists*, the *Postmoderns*, and the *Mirrorshades Group*. All of the juiced-up labels attempted to indicate that something radically new was happening in SF, a literature of novelty itself a bit overdue for a New Wave. When SF writer and editor Gardner Dozois used the term “cyberpunk,” however, it seemed the best fit.

The “cyber” takes off from Norbert Wiener’s “cybernetics,” the science of information and control in biological, elec-



Cyberpunk writer Lewis Shiner, author of *“Frontiera,”* about corporate mercenary Kane on the first colony on Mars.

tronic, and mechanical systems. One implication of Wiener’s theory was that humans and machines could be analyzed in much the same terms, and cyberpunk writers dramatize this assumption through designer biotech and direct contact between human and electronic processing systems.

One region where this interface may occur is “cyberspace,” space *behind* the computer screen, a landscape of dramatized and anthropomorphized electronic action, much as depicted in *TRON* and in *MAX HEADROOM*. William Gibson’s *Neuromancer* best exploits the idea.

The “punk” in cyberpunk is more atmospheric than descriptive, indicating a broadly dissatisfied, energy-charged attitude, a loose kinship with garage-band rock, rather than specific beliefs. Punk here has more to do with “unofficial” views than angry ones, more to do with the gleeful daring of computer hackers than with surly spiked-hair youth.

Responding to what he sees as the SF writer’s duty to “throw off as much mutational energy as possible,” Bruce Sterling suggested in the Brit-

ish SF journal *Foundation* that the secret is to: “Load every rift with ore; put pennies on the fuses; jam the pedal to the floorboards, and go for broke. We’re not going to survive this weirdest of centuries by dressing as elves. We need every last mutant and nutcase we can spare, to beat the brush for paths to the next millennium.”

Words like these make it clear why SF writer and critic Norman Spinrad wants to call the group the “neuromantics” in recognition of their “forthrightly high-tech romanticism.” As Spinrad wrote in *Isaac Asimov’s Science Fiction Magazine*, they are “anarchistic rockers in the old romantic tradition . . . who have finally come to embrace wholeheartedly the real world that science and technology have made, the technosphere, the cybersphere, the reality of the last quarter of the twentieth century and as far ahead as the visionary eye can see.” These writers are punk only in the sense that both Emilio Estevez and Harry Dean Stanton portrayed punk sensibilities in *REPO MAN*, punk in the sense that Harrison Ford played Deckard in *BLADE-*

*RUNNER*, punk in the tradition of Devo and Talking Heads more than in that of the Sex Pistols.

Indeed, any description of cyberpunk writing almost has to resort to rock music and music video comparisons, since story after story presents the future as a kind of Epcot Center redesigned by MTV, a world where stimulation is the only goal. Pat Cadigan’s “Rock On” and “Pretty Boy Crossover” suggest worlds where rock video can be a direct sensory interface between musician and audience or where “pretty boy” video stars may choose to crossover from human life to pure existence as electronic data and video image. Bruce Sterling and Lewis Shiner collaborated on “Mozart in Mirrorshades,” a kind of prose analogue to Falco’s music video, “Rock Me Amadeus.” Rock musicians are the protagonists of fiction by Lewis Shiner, John Shirley, and William Gibson, whose stories make much of “simstim” (simulated stimuli), neurotechnology which allows one to experience the world directly through a celebrity’s senses.

Virtually every cyberpunk writer interview sooner or later invokes rock music or video to explain the cyberpunk style. In this respect, cyberpunk extends to SF writing the unmistakable trend of SF film to make more and more prominent use of rock scores, if not of rock stars themselves as actors in the film. Just as *BACK TO THE FUTURE* and *MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME* showed how totally integrated into the SF film aesthetic rock music has become (and *vice versa*—there was, after all, a music video even of the love theme from *GODZILLA* 1985), cyberpunk writing suggests that rock music may now provide our most resonant images of the future, becoming for us what the white robes and lucite sandals signalled ‘30s film audiences of *THINGS TO COME*.

Finally—about those shades. *Mirrorshades* have become a kind of unofficial trademark for cyberpunk, a recurring image first noted by Lewis Shiner as one tie among wildly different stories. Those brightly

reflective sunglasses are a sign of a multifaceted, polished chrome future in which reflection—surface—becomes the new reality. In the future according to cyberpunk (as in the present according to most cultural critics), electronic images, holographs, clones, cyborgs, and hallucinations intermingle in a world where copies are often better than originals, where almost everything reflects, replicates, or imitates something else.

"By hiding the eyes," explains "archcyberpunk" Bruce Sterling, perhaps the movement's most vocal spokesperson, "mirrorshades prevent the forces of normalcy from realizing that one is crazed and possibly dangerous. They are the symbol of the sun-staring visionary, the biker, the rocker, the policeman, and similar outlaws." But the cyberpunk also know that mirror glass walls now just as surely identify multinational corporate headquarters and bank buildings, and the cyberpunk future also assumes that the most dangerous outlaws may well be the executives of big business, an assumption already a given in most recent SF films. Indeed, like many recent SF films (ROLLERBALL, BLADERUNNER, ALIENS, ROBOCOP, MAX HEADROOM), cyberpunk seems to posit a future where commercialism has run amok, where corporations exercise the power of government, and materialism, the relentless need for brand-name stuff, is the only driving force.

Cyberpunk is to SF writing what BLADERUNNER and



Director Ridley Scott brilliantly envisioned Philip K. Dick's vision of the future in BLADERUNNER (1982), thanks to the incandescent special visual effects of Douglas Trumbull, a seminal film that helped spawn cyberpunk, science fiction's new wave.

BRAZIL were to SF film and what MAX HEADROOM may prove to be to TV. Like the TV ads for 501 jeans or MTV's own promo spots, cyberpunk radiates its self-conscious hipness, its confidence that it is not just the right thing at the right time, but the *only* right thing for our time. The high energy fusion of cyberpunk writing, SF film, and contemporary TV (particularly MTV and MAX HEADROOM) may go far toward shaping the future of all three media. What may finally best explain the gripping popularity of these new writers is the urgent relevancy of their message. For what we see reflected in cyberpunk's mirrorshades may be nothing less than ourselves, the charged-up future of their stories a direct extrapolation of our present. □

Ripley's believe-it-or-not adventures in ALIENS will be continued in ALIEN III, being scripted by cyberpunk writer William Gibson, author of "Neuromancer."



## Cyberpunk writer William Gibson on authoring the script for ALIENS III

By Brooks Landon

One of the brightest and most newly risen stars of science fiction writing, William Gibson, author of the award-sweeping *Neuromancer*, was something of a surprise choice to do the script for ALIENS III. Not a big fan of SF film in general, Gibson had been strongly impressed by both ALIEN and ALIENS, identifying them as "about the only SF films out of Hollywood in the last 20 years I got a kick out of."

Expressing his preference for more marginal kinds of SF films such as those done by David Cronenberg, Gibson also mentioned his respect for John Carpenter's ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, "particularly its first ten minutes," which he identified as the first film that "had that look" now associated with BLADERUNNER and music video.

At first glance, the computer-savvy cyberpunk world of Gibson's fiction (*Neuromancer*, *Burning Chrome*, *Count Zero*), might seem far removed from the deep space gothic horror of the two ALIEN films, but strong connections soon become apparent. Gibson credits ALIEN as an influence on *Neuromancer*, singling out its "dirty spaceship, lived-in future" look as something

that immediately appealed to him. Gibson said that he can easily think of the stories of ALIEN and ALIENS as happening off world in the future posited in his fiction.

While Gibson's plots have had much to do with "cyberspace," a virtual, dramatized setting *within* computer processing, he is quick to note that he's "not real fetishistic about computers," nor tied to them for his stories. One thing he did observe about the first two ALIEN movies, however, was how rapid gains in computer graphic technology have already made the images on the spaceship monitors seem outdated.

Given a story for ALIENS III by producers Walter Hill and David Giler, Gibson was delighted to find that, "as it just worked out, it combined aspects of two separate scenarios," he had come up with himself. He reports that he is now about one-half way through with the screenplay. Unable to discuss specific matters of the scripting and casting for ALIENS III, Gibson only mentioned that he hopes to "come up with something that combines the very interior aspects of ALIEN with the more exterior concerns of ALIENS." And, he hints, audiences may be in for some major surprises. □

# SCHWARZENEGGER ON PREDATOR

## The star, the monster, the effects, and the makeup that didn't work.

By Dann Gire

Arnold Schwarzenegger isn't exactly the kind of guy to complain about the aches and pains that come with being a world-renowned action star. But hey, even the Man of PUMPING IRON has limits, like what he endured for the filming of 20th Century-Fox's "COMMANDO meets ALIEN" stalk-and-kill exercise, PREDATOR.

"I took more [abuse] on PREDATOR than I did in CONAN THE BARBARIAN," Schwarzenegger said. "I fell down that water fall [40 feet] and swam in this ice-cold water for days and for three weeks was covered in mud. It was freezing in the [Mexican] jungle. They had these heat lamps on all the time, but they were no good. If you stayed in front of the lamps, the mud dried. Then you had to take it off and put new mud on again. It was a no-win situation. The location was tough. Never on flat ground. Always on a hill. We stood all day long on a hill, one leg down, one leg up. It was terrible."

At least the movie solved a major dramatic problem that has plagued Schwarzenegger's movie career ever since he donned the white hat: a villain from outer space big enough and strong enough to be a worthy match. Anyone who saw COMMANDO can still chuckle over the embarrassing



Arnold Schwarzenegger as mercenary Dutch Schaeffer. Schwarzenegger hand-picked the role because he feels his screen persona requires a larger-than-life adversary.

climactic fight scene between Schwarzenegger and Vernon Wells. Schwarzenegger dwarfed his opponent on such a grand scale, the viewers' natural sympathy for the underdog nearly prompted them to root for the wrong guy.

In PREDATOR, Hollywood finally produced something that could conceivably put fear in Arnold's eyes. "There was plenty of fear there, believe me," the actor said. "Working with something like this was wild in reality because he [monster Kevin Peter Hall] couldn't really see. Not only in the movie does he have heat-seeking eyes, but in reality, the sonabitch couldn't see. So when he's suppose to slap me

around and stay far from my face, all of a sudden, *Whap!* There is this hand with claws on it!"

In PREDATOR, Schwarzenegger plays an elite special forces soldier called upon to do the dirty work nobody else can do. He joins macho men Carl Weathers, Sonny Landham and others as members of a rescue team sent in to save a downed government official in Central America. While they're digging for the dignity, they slowly become aware that something intends to kill them off, one by one.

"The movie was interesting from an acting point of view," Schwarzenegger said. "In one way, you can try to look vulnerable [to the camera], but you can't show that to the men around you. So if someone gets killed, you look at your men and say coldly, 'Okay, we'll move on.' You want to show vulnerability and that you're scared but you're also in control and you're tough."

Clint Eastwood's most popular screen persona, Dirty Harry Callahan, once observed that "a man's gotta realize his limitations." Schwarzenegger, who once idolized Eastwood and now "hangs out" with him periodically, understands the key to his success in movies depends on realizing not only his limitations, but his potential.

"The first thing I look for in a



The Predator, played by Kevin Peter Hall, in makeup designed by Stan Winston. The extraterrestrial hunter's intriguing invisibility effect (inset right) was designed by New York's R/Greenberg Associates. In the sequence shown, roto-scoped animation sparks signal the Predator's switch from camouflage to visibility as it rises to chase Arnold Schwarzenegger.





# PREDATOR

## SPECIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

*The Predator's intriguing cloak of invisibility effect was designed and created by New York's R/Greenberg Associates.*

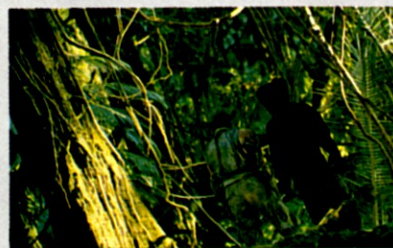
By Les Paul Robley

R/Greenberg Associates of New York created the optical effects of PREDATOR, including the creature's cloak of invisibility, its heat-sensing POV and various glowing blood and electrical spark effects. The intriguing invisibility effect was created by filming the creature in a bright red Spandex suit of roughly the same shape as the sculpted rubber monster suit worn while in its visible stage. The take was then repeated without the actors using a 30 percent wider lens on the camera. When the scenes are combined optically a vague outline of the creature is revealed to move through the greenery as the background bends around its shape. "It was as if you were taking a distorting Fresnel lens and moving it across the environment," said effects supervisor Joel Hynek.

The suit had to be a brilliant red since this is the farthest opposite spectral color from the predominant greens in the jungle or the blues of the sky overhead. Hynek pulled mattes off the scene of the red creature using a process similar to blue screen. From the creature's silhouette a series of from 8 to 15 inline mattes were generated by computer, each smaller in size. These inlines when stacked on top of each other create a dimensional appearance somewhat like a contour map.

To create the effect of the background appearing to bend

**The Predator becomes visible using roto-scoped mattes to dissolve in footage of the makeup suit over the in-line mattes of the cloaking effect.**



To create the cloaking invisibility effect, the Predator is first shot wearing a red suit (above) to generate a high-contrast clear-core matte and counter matte, from which a series of in-line mattes are generated (above right), used in making a final composite (left).

around the Predator as it moved, the background filmed without the creature is composited into each inline matte, beginning with the outermost, and is reduced in size each time. The background is filmed with a wider lens so that when it is reduced the frame edge won't show. For the outermost inline matte the background is enlarged so that it nearly matches the background of the

scene. The background is then reduced for each subsequent inline matte up to 25% for the innermost image.

"The main effect we wanted was to have a different image in each of the concentric mattes, whether by positioning or reduction," said Hynek. "The best effect achieved was by reduction. If we didn't have a wide plate, we'd blow-up the image so it resembled moving a

magnifying lens across the environment."

The compositing was achieved on R/Greenberg's Compuquad printer, an Academy Award-winning device that can combine up to four pieces of film and is computerized to move on 17 different axes. Operator Eugene Mamut worked out a way of programming the positioning of the

continued on page 57



script is a good idea," Schwarzenegger said. "For each script I accept and we do a movie from, I would say I throw away 50 scripts. The agency only sends 10 percent of the scripts they receive on to me. Then, I narrow that down to 10 percent of what I get and re-read those. Then, what is left is what you see on the screen. The problem [of the rejected scripts] usually is that it's not the right kind of movie for me. Or I don't get the point of the script in the first place. Or it's badly written. Or the timing is wrong. Maybe it's a sword-and-sorcery movie, a genre whose time has past. Or a western movie when I think that westerns are dead right now. It could be a hundred different things.

"A majority of scripts are rip-offs of other movies. People think they can become successful overnight. They sat down one weekend and wrote a script because they read that Stallone did that with ROCKY. PREDATOR was one of the scripts I read, but it bothered me in one way. It was just me and the alien. So we re-did the whole thing so that it was a team of Commandos and then I liked the idea. I thought it would make a much more effective movie and be much more believable. I liked the idea of starting out with an action-adventure, but then coming in with some horror."

Not surprisingly, Schwarzenegger has been offered directing jobs from studios courting him for potential exclusive deals and rights of first-refusal, including another turn as Conan. Surprisingly, Schwarzenegger has turned them down. Again, a man's gotta realize his limitations. "I have planned this for a long time, to produce my own films and eventually to direct my own films," Schwarzenegger said. "I don't like to jump ahead. I will do that when I feel I'm really ready for it. When I feel I know enough about it and feel that I'm as good or better than other people, then I will do that."

Schwarzenegger is quite comfortable with the leading man/good guy image he's hammered out in a series of action pictures such as COMMANDO, RAW DEAL, and

# PREDATOR

## THE ORIGINAL MAKEUP

*The director's monster-on-stilts design was dropped after it couldn't be made to work.*

**By Les Paul Robley**

Originally, 20th Century-Fox contracted the special makeup effects of PREDATOR to Richard Edlund's Boss Film Creature Shop, including the alien design of the predator. Due to problems filming the alien in Mexico, PREDATOR's makeup effects were yanked from Boss and given to Stan Winston, best known for his Academy Award-winning effects in ALIENS.

According to former Boss Films makeup supervisor Steve Johnson, the makeup failed due to the impractical design insisted upon by the film's director, John McTiernan. "We didn't design it, and I was against the design from the beginning," said Johnson, who now runs XFX Inc. of Burbank, his own effects company. According to Johnson, McTiernan supplied his own designs for 12-inch leg extensions to give the Predator a backward bent satyr-like leg (see sketch). But the design could not be made to work on the film's jungle locations. McTiernan could not be reached for comment through 20th Century-Fox.

The design miscalculation was a costly one. After six weeks of shooting in the jungles of Palanque, Mexico,

**Director John McTiernan.**



The design of the original Predator built by Boss Films, with fighting spurs that could be extended with the flick of an arm. Inset: director John McTiernan's leg extensions design that proved impractical during filming.

near Puerto Vallarta, the production had to shut down for Stan Winston to make a new Predator. Eight months later filming resumed for five weeks at the same locations.

Winston's design was made to look much more naturalistic and humanoid. Expressions on the face were achieved via radio controls operated near the camera. Steve Wang took Winston's drawings and devised some of the machinery and assorted hunting gear which the creature wore on its back. The makeup crew were pressed for time as Winston's company was already involved shooting Tri-Star's THE MONSTER SQUAD. They had from Christmas of 1986 to early February to complete the designs.

Johnson feels that the original design is more exciting

(pictured 17:3/4:5), and could have been made to work by rigging the creature on wires with a harness. The original design also incorporated long, arboreal, preying mantis-like arm extensions with retractable fighting spurs down the sides. A 12-inch insectoid bone extended from the head, resembling a bleached steer skull found in the desert.

Johnson even came up with the idea of having the original Predator performer Jean Claude Van Damme walk backwards to achieve the director's backward-bent leg design and then print the film in reverse. Though Johnson and designers Nikita Natz, Jim Kagel, and Kevin Brennan devised other makeup effects for the picture that were filmed successfully, none were used in the final cut. □

# PREDATOR

## SCORING THE HUNT

*This militarized monster movie, tiring of its own derivative weight, fails to bag its quarry*

By Dean Lamanna

PREDATOR combines elements from RAMBO and ALIENS—themselves thinly disguised celluloid aggregates—and comes up with a militarized monster movie that tires under its own derivative weight.

Following a brief opening prologue in space showing an alien vessel blazing through the earth's atmosphere (reminiscent of John Carpenter's THE THING and countless B-movies), director John McTiernan (NO-MADS) wastes no time in getting to the main action. The goofball chatter of Arnold Schwarzenegger's platoon of mercenaries aboard its transport chopper, though no match for ALIENS' endearing drop-ship repartee, carves out slim identities for the seven soldiers and sinks a dramatic spike for the carnage to come.

But McTiernan is no James Cameron. Nor is he even a George Pan Cosmatos. Perhaps due to the complexity of filming in the harsh Mexican jungle locations, most of the confrontations between an alien stalking the commando unit—including the prolonged, climactic one-on-one between the predator and Schwarzenegger—are executed with little flair or suspense. Alan Silvestri's game score takes a cue or two from John Williams and does much to hustle the action along, but battle fatigue becomes viewer fatigue and, finally, indifference toward the inevitable outcome of the film.

Stan Winston's intergalactic interloper is interesting, if a bit uninspired—an armor-clad, reptilian humanoid with turquoise eyes, toothy mandibles, and jiggling mane of fleshy,



Monster masher Arnold Schwarzenegger.

physical opponent for Schwarzenegger in terms of stature, and—when it sheds its armor and own small arsenal of weapons, including a souped-up photon gun that turns one character's rib cage inside out—it proves a witting survivalist, as well.

PREDATOR is not devoid of flashy gimmicks. Built into the alien's helmet is a "thermal vision" detector that assigns specific color values to varying degrees of heat and encodes the information in a vertical bar at the far left of the screen. Much like the supernatural title characters of WOLFEN, the alien can thus detect the movement and emotions of its prey.

McTiernan often chooses to linger in thermal vision too long, and it becomes tedious as a result. But the film's show-case visual asset is the alien's "cloaking device," under which the creature remains concealed for much of the film. The unique camouflage enables the predator to glide through the lush landscape as a rippling, shimmering blemish, invisible to the commandos. It's a well-conceived effect that makes for some truly tense moments.

Accompanying Schwarzenegger in the mayhem is a fairly diversified and likeable cast—with Carl Weathers, former pro-wrestler Jesse "The Body" Ventura, and young screenwriter Shane Black (LETHAL WEAPON) providing the rescue unit's backbone. Elpidia Carrillo, as a female guerilla captured by the unit during the attack on a rebel camp, serves the plot as neither a love interest nor a victim; her role is lost in this otherwise macho-minded production. □

### PREDATOR

A 20th Century-Fox release of a Gordon-Silver-Davis production in association with Amercent Films and American Entertainment Partners. 6/87, 107 mins. In color & Dolby. Director, John McTiernan. Producers, Lawrence Gordon, Joel Silver & John Davis. Executive producers, Laurence P. Pereira & Jim Thomas. Screenplay by Jim Thomas & John Thomas. Director of photography, Donald McAlpine (Leon Sanchez, Mexico). Editors, John F. Link & Mark Helfrich. Music, Alan Silvestri. Sound, Manuel Topete. Production designer, John Vallone. Art direction, Frank Richwood, Jorge Saenz, & John K. Reinhart Jr. Creature created by Stan Winston. Special visual effects, R/Greenberg; supervisor—Joel Hynek.

Dutch ..... Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Dillon ..... Carl Weathers  
Anna ..... Elpidia Carrillo  
Mac ..... Bill Duke  
Blain ..... Jesse Ventura  
Billy ..... Sonny Landham  
Hawkins ..... Shane Black  
Predator ..... Kevin Peter Hall

squidlike protrusions. Again, the rigors of the jungle shoot probably precluded anything more ambitious (i.e., anything with more than two arms and two legs). Behaviorally, the creature is more than an extraterrestrial Jason Voorhees: it has a Rambo-esque belief in the fairness of the hunt, and it won't attack if its prey is unarmed or lacking harmful intent. It's a fitting

both CONAN movies. "I believe right now I should only do films that a lot of people enjoy watching and that bring in a considerable amount of money to the studios," he said. "They pay my salary."

Still, the definitive Schwarzenegger performance remains the kill-crazy cyborg in THE TERMINATOR, the actor's version of Darth Vader with a laser-sighted .45 automatic. Not only did Schwarzenegger play the heavy for a change, he took an arguably supporting role to main characters played by Michael Biehn and Linda Hamilton. A possible sequel is in the talking stages.

"They are finally ironing out all legal matters between the partners, Hemdale and filmmakers Jim Cameron and Gale Hurd," said Schwarzenegger. "When they get everything settled, they will go and do the second one. I loved that movie and I loved working with Jim Cameron."

The holder of 13 world bodybuilding championships, Schwarzenegger has managed to get by without bodyguards, something that Stallone has frequently used in public. It could be that TERMINATOR permanently guaranteed Schwarzenegger respect from the populace. But he has another theory.

"I don't have a hostile image that prompts people to say 'I'm going to try him out,'" he said. "Even when I was bodybuilding, I never felt I was King Kong and I should be out there beating up on somebody, or felt that I was better than the next guy. I always felt that everyone's importance is pretty equal. It just happens that some people are luckier, some are bigger and stronger or win championships."

"I think a lot of times this bodyguard stuff is a show," continued Schwarzenegger. "I've never seen celebrities being attacked. I've been to so many events, celebrity tennis tournaments, celebrity skiing tournaments, the Carousel Ball they have in Denver every year where everybody including politicians and entertainers show up, and I've never noticed anyone outside waiting to beat up celebrities. I think it's just a show." □

# PREDATOR

## THE MAN IN THE SUIT

*After playing the Predator, black actor Kevin Peter Hall has sworn-off monster roles.*

### Dann Gire

"I'm the Robert Redford of the monster set," said Kevin Peter Hall, the 7-foot, 2-inch actor who played the alien in PREDATOR. "I'm probably the highest paid actor to ever don a suit. I'm definitely the highest recommended. Everybody's always calling me for roles. But I'm turning them down. I don't want to do this for the rest of my life. I need to cross over. I need to get out of the suits."

Hall, 32, who also played the Bigfoot in this summer's HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS, had been thinking about dumping the monster business for a while, but it took PREDATOR to convince him to do it immediately. "PREDATOR wasn't a movie, it was a survival story for all of us," he said. "You remember that scene near the end where I come up out of the lagoon, chasing Arnold? The water was foul. There were leeches in it. It was stagnant and it was gross. I'd always have this crew member shoving my head in the water until it was all the way under."

"By the time I make it to the shore, the suit weighs about 500 pounds," continued Hall. "I was lucky to get back alive. I couldn't even see out of the alien's mask. I had to use 'The Force' to move. I would rehearse the scene with the head off. I would feel out where I had steps and I would



Actor Kevin Peter Hall.

memorize where everything was."

Hall got the part in PREDATOR as a direct result of his work on HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS, donning a suit made by Stan Winston. "The suit looked great," said Hall, "but it was difficult to wear and it was heavy and off-balance. It was difficult to make it work. The Rastafarian hairdo and the whole outlandish look of the Predator was my idea. He looks like a jungle man himself. I wanted to play him scary, but the director wanted something more austere and menacing, not just scary."

Born the second of eight children Kevin Peter Hall began dreaming of an acting career at the age of eight when his parents bought him a "Showboat" cardboard cut-out

playset with actors and props. As he got older and taller and taller and taller, people around him began to dampen his dreams by calling attention to his size as an albatross.

"You know, I got something from Arnold Schwarzenegger I never really expected, a lesson in perseverance," Hall said. "When Arnold wanted to be an actor a long time ago, they told him he couldn't speak English well enough. He was too ugly. He was a muscle-bound jerk. He's really been an inspiration for me. Now, he may never rise to the level of a Dustin Hoffman, yet he's definitely a movie star."

"I remember laughing one night because Arnold came up out of the lagoon and he was covered with leeches like Humphrey Bogart in AFRICAN QUEEN. I would have been freaking out. Arnold? He just goes 'Leeches! Biff, pow, boom!' and knocks them off. This guy's tough. We played practical jokes on each other because Arnold's a real practical joker. Once we got about 18 frogs and we let them loose in his room. One thing about Arnold, if you get him, he'll never let you know. He never said a word. We sat up all night long laughing about how he must have been squeezing his biceps to catch all those frogs. He had to get them out. For days afterward, we'd go rivett! rivett! and he never broke. He never got me back for that because he didn't know exactly



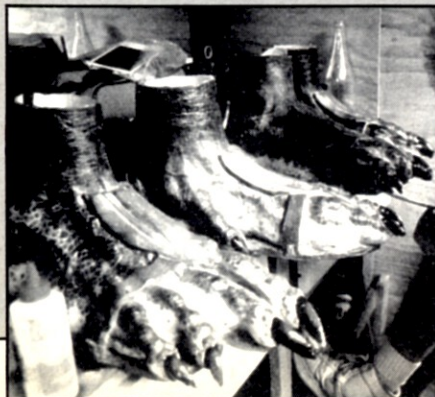
Hall, suited as the Predator, minus head, preparing to plunge into the dank, leech-infested Mexican waters.

who did it."

Since his film debut as the genetically deformed bear in PROPHECY, Hall has expanded into legitimate theatre and television, mostly in roles tailored for his unique physical size. He played the basketball player in Meg Tilly's first movie, the modestly successful ONE DARK NIGHT, and appeared as a regular on NBC-TV's short-lived series MISFITS OF SCIENCE.

Since the releases of HARRY and PREDATOR, Hall has been flooded with offers to play vampires and werewolves, including the title character in a film titled FULL MOON BLUES. "I turned them all down," Hall said. "Most of the time, being in a suit is a terrible job. It's hot and uncomfortable. It isn't what I got in the business for. I've done it because I've gotten good at it and so far it's made my life a lot better to do them. But I don't want to be typed. I don't want people to say, 'Oh, that's the monster man' and not give me a chance to do other things. □

Monster feet (left) and other costume parts stand at the ready as Hall gets a final fitting in the makeup trailer on location.



# FLOWERS in the ATTIC

By Sheldon  
Teitelbaum

Most male genre buffs have likely never heard of novelist Virginia C. Andrews, who died last December of cancer at her home in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Andrews was second only to Stephen King as a top-selling producer of horror fiction, the author of five of the ten best-selling horror paperbacks of all time (King wrote four, including the top seller *Pet Semetary*, and Ann Rice wrote one, according to the Association of American Publishers). Andrews' bizarre coming-of-age novel, *Flowers in the Attic*, has apparently sold over four million copies in paperback since its publication by Pocket Books in 1979. The first in a trilogy, it catapulted the rest of her work into megahit territory, with over 24 million copies of her books already in circulation.

Andrews' adjective-laden prose is said to have gained its greatest adherents among adolescent girls and, to a lesser extent, among middle-aged female readers. In fact, Fries Entertainment and New World

**A romance novel, or out-and-out horror? V. C. Andrews best-seller comes to the screen.**

Pictures first contemplated a film adaptation of *Flowers in the Attic* after Charles Fries and Sy Levin, its executive producers, were, some six years ago, handed the book by their teen-aged daughters. Indeed, Bob Rheme at New World also learned of the book through his daughter. New World has plans to release the film version November 20.

The story tells of four children who are locked in the attic of a mansion by their mother and fanatically religious grandmother. The children spend two and a half years in captivity. They remain chained by their refusal to accept that their mother had betrayed them in order to be reinstated in her father's will, or to recognize that she was intent upon killing them. The two older children, a

14 year-old boy and a 12 year-old girl, achieve sexual awakening within the confines of their attic prison. Themes of infanticide, incest and sadism are, in fact, overtly treated in the novel.

The book is ostensibly about the need for young people to wrest independence from parents, who are often loathe to let go. Two months before her death, Andrews told Jeffrey Bloom, who wrote the script and directed the picture, that she herself had never been able to accomplish that. She had spent her life in a wheelchair, wracked by sundry auto-immune diseases and cared for by her mother and a nurse.

Bloom, a television and feature writer and director whose credits include *BLOOD BEACH*, *THE RIGHT OF*

*THE PEOPLE, DOG-POUND SHUFFLE*, and *SWASHBUCKLER*, was the fourth writer charged with adapting the novel for film. A previous failed version had come from the pen of Wes Craven. There was nothing intrinsically wrong with the Craven draft, said Bloom. But it pointed

to what he believed was a mistaken conceptual approach to the project by its producers, who envisioned it as an out-right horror film.

Although the novel was not bereft of frightening elements, he explained, the material was clearly no *FRIDAY THE 13TH*. "It's a psychologically dark, fanciful, gothic fairy tale," said Bloom. "But there's nothing horrifying about it in a movie sense. New World, however, kept asking for horror and they kept getting it. But upon reading the various drafts, one of which had been submitted by V. C. Andrews herself, they didn't like what they were seeing."

Bloom said that he had not been enamored of the book. But he welcomed the challenge of succeeding where so many

Left: V.C. Andrews filmed a brief cameo as a maid shortly before she died last December. Right: During her visit to the set, with actress Louise Fletcher.





Stern Louise Fletcher brings lunch to her grandchildren in their attic prison in *FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC*, to be released by New World Pictures November 20.

others had failed. And, having been on contract at Fries throughout these travails, he hoped "to prove that they should have come to me in the first place." The filmmaker devoted six weeks to the task of writing a script. He believes that his own version won the day because it remained, on the whole, faithful to the novel.

Being faithful meant Bloom didn't skirt the issue of the burgeoning physical love between the brother and sister, which manages to avoid being lurid only because of the unique pressures to which these children are subjected. In the novel, Cathy and Chris are left to rely only upon each other as they become surrogate parents to their five year-old twin siblings. Their view of themselves and of each other is further complicated by Chris' obviously Oedipal love for his insane mother and Cathy's deep and abiding love for her deceased father. By assuming the role of parents, they begin to see each other as connubial partners.

Bloom's determination to remain faithful to the Andrews novel could not, however, overcome the obstacle of sympathetically portraying a budding sexual relationship be-

**“Infanticide, incest and sadism, overtly treated in the novel, were shocking when viewed in the film by fans of the book, leading to cuts and some hasty reshooting.”**

tween brother and sister to an adolescent audience. To be sure, Bloom toned it down significantly in the film version—whereas the book makes no attempt to hide this relationship, the film merely implied it on two occasions, when seemingly innocent embraces led to not unpassionate kisses.

At a test screening in the San Fernando Valley early this year, attended by a number of fervid fans of the novel, however, not even these relatively tame scenes went down well with the aficionados. "It bothered the hell out of them," noted a very puzzled Bloom, who has since cut the scenes even further. "I don't know if it's some kind of conscious teenage hypocrisy or if it's legit—but nobody liked it. I think the real dilemma was that this book is read primarily by young girls. And young girls don't want sexual titillation. If a

boy takes his shirt off, that's cool. But if it goes any further, it makes them uneasy."

The fans had also been alarmed, for instance, by a scene in which the mother, played by Victoria Tennant, disrobes in front of her ailing father so that her own mother, played by Louise Fletcher, can whip her. Another scene that didn't win kudos from fans involved a violent confrontation during the finale with a maddened Louise Fletcher.

Yet at a second screening, held after attempts to remedy these apparent excesses, another audience, a hipper audience, berated the film for its deliberate ambiguity on the incest issue.

Ashen-faced studio executives viewing the film for the first time quickly rescheduled the release from March to November, asking Bloom to go back and edit or reshoot

segments of the film. Eventually another director was brought in to write and shoot a new ending at a cost of \$250,000 in which the kids escape and revenge themselves on their mother—she is hung in her own wedding dress.

Bloom wouldn't comment on the reshooting. He was convinced that the movie could be made more accessible by instituting a number of relatively painless and quick fixes. In his view, *FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC*, which came in under \$4 million and took 40 days to shoot—five over schedule—didn't need to break boxoffice records to be profitable. It would be enough, he said, if the film succeeded with its core group of Andrews fans.

But Bloom still points to one unwavering source of delight in his film. It is a cameo shot of V. C. Andrews, playing a window-washing maid in the establishing shot of the mansion location. Andrews had appeared at the Massachusetts location with her mother and nurse, garnering significant media coverage for herself in the process. "She had to be propped up so that she could literally be left to hang there with one hand," said Bloom. "She was just so excited." □

# Hello Mary Lou

## PROM NIGHT II

**This sequel in name only is bolstered by its elaborate makeup and special effects sequences.**

*By Gary Kimber*

THE HAUNTING OF HAMILTON HIGH (17:2:16) has undergone a name change courtesy of its U.S. distributor The Samuel Goldwyn Company, which picked up the Canadian production for release October 9th. Feeling that it sounded too much like New World's earlier '87 release RETURN TO HORROR HIGH, Goldwyn decided, after test screenings, that identification with the 1980 slasher picture starring Jamie Lee Curtis was needed. This, in spite of the fact that, except for its title, HELLO MARY LOU: PROM NIGHT II bears no direct link to the original. The actors are different, the director is different and the tone of the film is more supernatural horror than slash and gash, although some killings do happen.

Filmed by Toronto-based independent production company, Simcom Limited, the picture has set a Canadian record for pre-sales, netting approximately \$5 million (Canadian) from the Goldwyn company. That's not too shabby on a budget of \$3.9 million (Canadian). Directed by Bruce Pittman, written by Ron Oliver and with an extensive special effects team headed by Jim Doyle, the story's tale of the supernatural has former prom queen Mary Lou Maloney



New prom queen Vicki Carpenter (Wendy Lyon) gets caught in a nightmare world of possession.

return from the grave to possess the new prom queen and take revenge on the jilted boyfriend—now school principal—whose prank caused her death at the prom thirty years before.

The idea for the film germinated in 1985 when the head of Simcom Limited, Peter Simpson, proposed a sequel to PROM NIGHT involving the element of high school possession. It was then handed to John Sheppard (BULLIES) to flesh out, but he wasn't able to get a grasp on it. After numerous revisions by writer Ron Oliver, the production was shot in six weeks in August and September 1986 in Edmonton/Alberta, Canada, home of Canada's Stanley Cup Champions.

Special effects man Jim

Doyle also supervised the work on Wes Craven's A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET. Working with a budget that ballooned to nearly \$300,000 (Canadian), some of the effects Doyle created included a mechanical rocking horse that comes to life. Its eyes move, its tongue comes out, it salivates, snorts and snarls, all done by remote control requiring three operators to work. There's also a revolving room where a girl gets sucked into a swirling vortex of a blackboard, a priest's impaled head, and a locker scrunching scene where a student is killed.

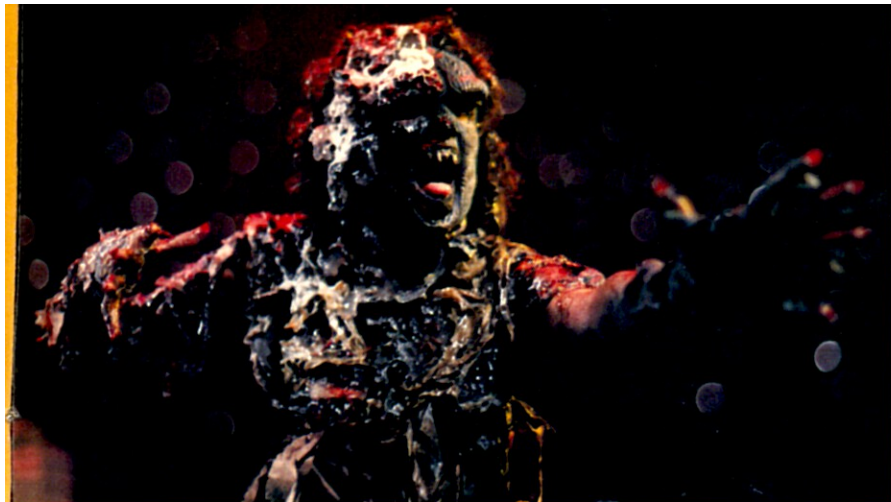
Unfortunately, two of Doyle's more complicated gags were dropped in the final edit, not because they looked hokey but rather because, according to line producer Ray Sager "they

didn't look dramatic enough. In context of the story they lacked impact." Sager is a former actor who appeared in films for Herschell Gordon Lewis. "One featured a girl floating down the hallway of the school," he said. "The other showed an undulating wall that rips open." Time consuming, expensive sequences, yet all went for naught.

There were also a number of reshoots of scenes already filmed by director Bruce Pittman, the additional inserts shot by screenwriter Ron Oliver, Simcom president Peter Simpson and Jim Doyle, who was flown up from Los Angeles. These were done in Toronto at the end of 1986. Pittman said he was always available to handle the additional work but was not asked to participate. The scenes involved blowing up a gravestone, some explanatory shots, and a new ending which only manifested itself in the editing room.

Assisting Doyle in the effects department was Canadian-born newcomer Nancy Howe, a young woman who played a large role in one of the picture's key sequences. As special effects makeup artist, Howe designed the look of the 1950's and 1980's segments. During the locker squashing bit she produced the blood bags and goo while Doyle and Gary





Left: Stunt woman Loretta Bailey as Mary Lou, emerging from the body of prom queen Vicki Carpenter. Right: Lisa Schrage as Mary Lou, beautiful again, but deadly.

Paller (ICEMAN) worked the cables. Doyle helped on some effects, but mostly they worked separately. Howe's major contribution was the climactic scene when Mary Lou has completely taken over and bursts out of the new prom queen's body. There were eight stages to the effect, involving three hours of makeup for about three seconds of screen time.

The first stage, featuring the undead Mary Lou at her worst, was a life-size, waist-high puppet. Because Mary Lou had died horribly in a fire, Howe wanted a corpse that looked wizened, almost mummy-like, as the first stage. The effect's second, third, and fourth stages feature mime/dancer Loretta Bailey as she emerges from the prom queen's prostrate form. Lisa Schrage then takes over for the final stages.

The diminutive Miss Howe laughed heartily about the scene's filming. "I had scored the rubber chest of the prom queen dummy under the stage,"

she recalled. "Jim Doyle is on one side of me, Gary Paller's on the other, and they are running the cables on the dummy's neck and mouth. Ray Sager directed this scene and somebody said it sounded like he was a doctor instructing a woman giving birth. He was yelling, 'Push! Push! Push! Harder now! Harder!' I hadn't scored the chest wide enough and the puppet wouldn't come through. The puppet was covered in goo the consistency of hair gel. I'm

underneath trying to push it through and it's not working. I got on my knees to push and was sliding in the goo. It took about five minutes, but it felt like an hour." The puppet, lovingly nicknamed Missy, is on display in Howe's studio, a reminder of her day spent slipping and sliding in Edmonton.

After her experience on the film, Howe's sights are now firmly set on doing more work in the makeup effects field. Studying by correspondence

with the legendary Dick Smith and using an extensive library devoted to effects techniques, Howe is largely self-taught, with makeup credits on several other low budget films including MARK OF CAIN, BLUE MURDER and BULLIES. Presently between assignments, she busies herself making up her boyfriend in the Dustin Hoffman aging process Smith created in LITTLE BIG MAN.

Although Howe enjoys the challenge of finding a solution to a troublesome effects problem, she professes a deep dislike for the kinds of movies she helps create. "Horror movies give me nightmares," she said sincerely. "I scare myself to think I have an imagination that bad when I see the rushes on things I've done. Now, movies like PLATOON, THE DEER HUNTER, and APOCALYPSE NOW really scare me. The challenge for me is not in the scare but in the technology of how an effect can be accomplished."

Leave it to the audience, they'll appreciate the scares. □

Makeup artist Nancy Howe applies the Mary Lou mask on Loretta Bailey.



# REVIEWS

## Even for Satan Jack Nicholson, three women prove a handful

### THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK

A Warner Bros release of a Guber Peters co-production of a Kennedy Miller film. 6/87, 118 mins. In color & Dolby. Producers, Neil Canton, Peter Guber, & Jon Peters. Executive producers, Rob Cohen & Don Deslin. Director, George Miller. Screenplay by Michael Cristofer, based on a novel by John Updike. Director of photography, Vilmos Zsigmond. Editors, Richard Francis-Bruce & Hubert C. DeLa Bouillierie. Music, John Williams. Special makeup effects, Rob Bottin. Production designer, Polly Platt. Art director, Mark Mansbridge. Set designers, Robert Sessa & Stan Tropp. Sound, Art Rochester. Visual effects supervisor, Michael Owens (ILM). Special effects supervisor, Mike Lanteri. Animation supervisor, Ellen Lichtwardt.

Daryl Van Horne ..... Jack Nicholson  
Alexandra Medford ..... Cher  
Jane Spofford ..... Susan Sarandon  
Suki Ridgemont ..... Michelle Pfeiffer  
Felicia Alden ..... Veronica Cartwright  
Clyde Alden ..... Richard Jenkins  
Walter Neff ..... Keith Jochim  
Fidel ..... Carel Struycken



by Thomas Doherty

Witches have Nicholson, as the satanic Daryl Van Horne, hopping mad, makeup by Rob Bottin.

George Miller's version of John Updike's classy novel of manners isn't magical, but it is sort of bewitching—and tricky enough to keep a wary eye on. Less a supernatural adventure than an unequal battle of the sexes, *THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK* takes hoary and whorey clichés about men, women, sex, fantasy, and evil, and in good satanic fashion lies about its intentions. From the first moment—when the straight-laced music teacher orders “Horns up!” to her student band—the male instrument is exposed and assaulted. But even stacked up against a three-headed female cobra, pinned and broken on the kitchen floor, the image and progeny of the “horny little devil” prevail in the end.

It helps that the man under the knife, one Daryl Van Horne, is incarnated by Jack Nicholson. The disproportion in star charisma between Nicholson and the coven he beds and battles—the prim cellist Jane (Susan Sarandon), the pragmatic sculptress Alexandra (Cher), and the prolific earth mother Suki (Michelle Pfeiffer)—skews the sexual combat in the male's favor. No matter what the official score card registers, this is a fixed fight. Individually, the actresses are enchanting and collectively they are nearly overpowering (in one tantalizing tableau, the trio languishes invitingly on a king-size bed, a centerfold

fantasy come alive) but against Nicholson they might as well be furniture. Flashing his killer smile, arching his eyebrows wildly, Jack the Knife is a penetrating presence not to be blunted.

Like much sexual comedy of the past decade, *THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK* plays it both ways, letting each sex get its punches in. Technically, the women win on points; they are Van Horne's creators and destroyers, conjuring him with an inadvertent spell and cutting him down to size with a Voodoo doll. The cocky seducer worms his way into their affections only to discover that even for satan three women are a handful. They are a credit to their gender: sisterly solidarity overcomes individual lust and defeats the common patriarchal enemy. As a consequence perhaps, though Nicholson maintains a dirty grin and a dirtier mouth, the movie has only one real moment of salacious heterosexual hilarity. Cooing, “you have the most beautiful callous,” to the repressed cellist, Daryl stages a musical seduction that leaves her, bow and body, smoking and aflame.

Naturally, Nicholson gets the best lines and showboat scenes. The sequence where the desperate devil—now just another heart-sick, tormented male—bursts into a church service and launches into a tirade about “wimmin” is a side-splitting, sex-specific incitement to riot. Bellowing like a wounded

bull, he lets go with some ripe macho bull of his own: “Women—an accident? Or did God do this to us *on purpose?*” Snoring, snorting, and stomping, Nicholson performs with the kind of demonic fervor that makes you think Jack Torrance escaped from the Overlook in *THE SHINING*.

If the transitions from magic to comedy to eroticism are smooth enough, the sudden shifts to cruelty and evil are abrupt and unsettling. Outside the magic circle of Sarandon-Cher-Pfeiffer is Veronica Cartwright as Felicia, the town prig inflicted with an unaccountable measure of pain and humiliation. She breaks her leg, vomits up gallons of cherries, and gets clubbed to death by her maddened husband. Despite the rotten treatment, Cartwright is surprisingly affecting in a thankless role (her hospital scene, for example, is both more sympathetic and frightening than Pfeiffer's). Odd that the macho pig principal is set as the victim of choice, but the innocuous female feels the full wrath of the Witches of Eastwick.

Filmed in the picture postcard town of Cohasset, Massachusetts, *THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK* lends magic to the ordinary and vice versa. In these colonial environs, it seems only natural that tennis balls defy physics and ladies levitate poolside, that the devil should drive the best foreign cars and sport righteous suitwear. The

natural New England location blends most beautifully with unnatural cinematic occurrences in the gorgeous, mysterious thunderstorm that announces the ladies' powers and initiates their shenanigans. The special effects from ILM (who else?) and flashy makeup by Rob Bottin (ditto), are pretty tame by contemporary standards.

No novice with a Cinemascope lens, director George Miller exploits widescreen space by balancing the female trio against the lone, increasingly frustrated man. Only once does the MAD MAX auteur resort to a speed trap (a frantic highway race by Daryl), but his penchant for strange backup characters (such as the Lerch-like valet Fidel and a smarmy school principal) remains sharp. He also knows the value of a good tease, not by disrobing the actresses but by prolonging the entrance of the top draw actor.

With scenarist Michael Cristofer, Miller has taken extensive liberties with the Updike original, and the changes generally improve matters. More effectively than the source material, Miller's *THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK* captures the mystery, resistance, and attraction between the sexes and the magic in their union. An interesting Miller touch is his focus on the role of the image in modern life—the presence of imaginary characters in the mind—as an underlying theme. To fully possess his women, Van Horne puts them on videotape; their victory over him reverses the hierarchy of image control.

The film's final sequence is striking, an ironic restaging of the signature Spielberg shot. Three babies waddle towards a wall-length display of TV monitors broadcasting multiple image of Daddy Van Horne koochy-kooing paternally. The witches hit the off button on the remote control, killing his image and ending the film—but that devilish smile is impossible to blot out. Even off screen, Nicholson gets the last laugh. □

*Joe Dante's nasty fantastic voyage is sly and stylish*

**INNERSPACE**

A Warner Bros release of a Steven Spielberg presentation from Amblin Entertainment of a Guber-Peters production. 7/87, 120 mins. Producer, Michael Finkel. Co-producer, Chip Proser. Executive producers, Spielberg, Peter Guber, & Jon Peters. Co-executive producers, Frank Marshall, Kathleen Kennedy. Director, Joe Dante. Screenplay by Jeffrey Boam & Proser, from a story by Proser. Director of photography, Andrew Laszlo. Editor, Kent Beyda. Music, Jerry Goldsmith. Production designer, James H. Spencer. Art director, William Matthews. Set designers, Judy Cammer & Gene Nollman. Costume designer, Rosanna Norton. Sound, Ken King. Visual effects supervisor, Dennis Muren.

Lt. Tuck Pendleton	Dennis Quaid
Jack Putter	Martin Short
Lydia Maxwell	Meg Ryan
Victor Scrimshaw	Kevin McCarthy
Dr. Margaret Canker	Fiona Lewis
Mr. Igoe	Vernon Wells
The Cowboy	Robert Picardo
Dr. Greenbush	William Schallert

by Thomas Doherty

A nasty fantastic voyage in the guise of an easygoing summer romp, *INNERSPACE* is Joe Dante's most vital entertainment since his "It's a Good Life" segment of the *TWILIGHT ZONE* quartet. Stylish, sly, and a little sinister, this anatomically-correct SF adventure has the look of an ILM mock-up, the sensibility of a Warner Bros cartoon, and the pulse of a music video. Whenever a tired chase scene or weak pratfall threatens to harden its arteries, Dante injects a dose of cinematic flash to maintain the buzz. Even without such artificial stimulants, though, *INNERSPACE* is a vigorous organism. At the very least, it has guts.

Like Spielberg (who as executive producer gets top billing in the ad campaign), the director has lately been mining the catacombs of childhood memory for inspiration, albeit never with the same sappy gullibility as his sponsor. If in the past Dante's been a little too indulgent and facile for his own good—whatever their other qualities, *THE HOWLING*, *GREMLINS*, and *EXPLORERS* are all top heavy with effects and cluttered with referent debris from other films—in *INNERSPACE* he modulates his worst tendencies for a deep probe into human character, not least his own. On this trip down under, Dante's own inner space seems as serpentine and blood curdling as an anatomy lesson.

Graduating from kiddieworld,  
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Dennis Quaid as test pilot Tuck Pendleton gets miniaturized courtesy of effects by Industrial Light & Magic.

**Dennis Muren on *INNERSPACE* effects by ILM**

By Ron Magid

With Dennis Muren heading the unusual *INNERSPACE* project at San Rafael's resident effects braintrust, Industrial Light & Magic, he decided to take a very different tack: to match his effects techniques to the freewheeling, improvisational approach of the film's director, Joe Dante. Muren has long felt that too many films have been locked into post-*STAR WARS* techniques when there are many older, but equally effective methods to create convincing illusions. Of these, Muren chose live forced-perspective photography and real time miniature effects done in-camera to emulate Dante's spontaneous filmmaking style.

To develop the inner body sets, Muren worked with concept artist Richard Vander Wende and art director Harley Jessup to come up with the contradictory feeling of a huge environment that also looked incredibly small. "That was quite a task to get that look into our sets," said Muren. "I had a very different idea of how things should look than they did back when they made *FANTASTIC VOYAGE*. I thought our film shouldn't have such a studio feel to it. The look was much more

organic and real.

"My approach was to do as many shots as we could in-camera as practically finished shots, because I thought that style was more in keeping with a Joe Dante film," continued Muren. "We did our effects live to give it a feeling of spontaneous reality. I wanted this stuff to look as if it were photographed by a miniature Dante actually in the body and reacting to everything he was seeing."

Tuck's submersible pod dangles with attacking Igoe over the acid-churning pit of Martin Short's stomach.



Bill George and the ILM model shop constructed the numerous large scale miniatures, their biggest assignment since *RETURN OF THE JEDI*. The sets were made out of large pieces of foam rubber, with urethane used where a translucent quality was needed for lighting. Some sets were built for use in a seven foot square underwater tank. Because Muren wanted to do live shots of the bloodstream using a

miniature pod in an aquatic environment, a tubular set dubbed "the Artery Raceway" had to be built that would allow for lengthy traveling moves.

"The set was about forty feet in length and about eighteen inches in diameter," said Muren. "It was filled with running water and thousands of little red blood cells that we made from a silicon compound, each the size of a silver dollar. We had a giant pump to move the water at a very fast clip through the pipe, which curved around a large section of our stage floor. The entire thing was waterproof. Its sides were built out of plexiglass so we could light it from the outside.

"Within was a sleeve of urethane that had all the texture built into it,"

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Inside the Bigfoot suit in HARRY & THE HENDERSONS

By Dann Gire

Inside Rick Baker's monster suit in HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS is 7 foot 2 inch black actor Kevin Peter Hall, who also played a monster of a different kind in this summer's PREDATOR (see page 34). Hall's sasquatch had such personality and character, Universal Pictures' marketing surveys came back with glowing reviews from test audiences. In fact, only Universal's boxoffice smash BACK TO THE FUTURE earned a higher positive viewer response. But the marketing survey was flawed. The opening weekend grosses of Hall's films told the story. PREDATOR earned more than \$12 million. HARRY mustered a disappointing \$4 million. Why the discrepancy?

"I think it's Spielberg," Hall said. "I think if people hadn't seen E.T. and hadn't been touched by it so much, then they'd be a lot more positive on this film. It [HARRY] is a wonderful film, a great film for the whole family. I think a lot of it was the [negative] reviews. And I think it's how they [Universal Pictures] promoted it. Harry was always such a big secret. You never saw Harry [in ads and commercials]. You just heard the movie was about 'Bigfoot.' You mention 'Bigfoot' to people and they say 'Wow, that's dumb.' I hope the word-of-mouth might save it through the summer."

Hall much preferred the challenge of the Bigfoot role to the alien hunter of PREDATOR. "Not only is Harry the pivotal character in the story, he has to show an entire emotional range," said Hall of the part. "I had two months of rehearsal before I even met the cast. All the mechanical things were functional and I had plenty of time to make everything work."

"The suit was perfect," he continued. "They spent money on it. Everything worked every day. [Costume designer] Rick Baker was emphatic when he created Harry that I should play it. We get along really, really great. I never had to go in and



Kevin Peter Hall as Harry in the expressive Bigfoot makeup designed by Oscar-winner Rick Baker.

ask 'Hey, what's the face going to be doing in this scene?' They always came to me and asked what the character would be doing in the scenes. The performance came first."

The amazing, intricate facial expressions designed by Baker are the single most impressive aspect of the Bigfoot's persona. "I would go in and make my own faces," said Hall. "They would copy those faces for the expressions. It's really hard to break down who had control of what. Those are my eyes you see, but I wore green contacts. I had control of the mouth, but I didn't have control over the lips. I had control over the eyes, but I didn't have control over the cheeks. All that was operated by people off-camera. It's really a miracle that it works together."

Another aspect that lends a great deal of humor and credibility to the creature is his powerful gait, a comical movement of the lower body as if the beast were about to demonstrate the rumba. "To get that walk, I visited the zoo twice a week when I was researching Harry," said Hall. "Everyone thinks I went to the monkey cage. No way. The animals I watched were the bears and the

lions. They have the power and the weight. I didn't want to do anything that looked like a monkey. If you notice, Harry's movements are mostly in the hips and the legs. I spent more time working out the walk than anything else. It was funny because I'd do my walk in the zoo and people would say, 'What's wrong with that guy? He looks like he's got a load in his pants.'"

Hall also gave Harry an extremely identifiable running style, a long-legged stride that wasn't graceful, but hinted at great speed and power. "That was a combination of me and the suit," he said. "The suit changes everything. You adapt everything to what the suit allows you to do and doesn't allow you to do. The feet were so large, they created a walking problem. You have to

get used to it. Then you work it into the performance. A creature with feet this big would have to take this type of step. Since I had two months to rehearse, I was ready. The only thing I wasn't prepared for was the actual forest. All my work was in Los Angeles and in the zoo. When I got to the location and I was actually in the lushness of the forest, there was slippery moss all over the place and it was different walking through the terrain. I took some very hysterical falls in that suit. It was wonderfully padded, so I never got hurt."

Though Hall is turning down offers to play more monsters so he can concentrate on straight dramatic acting, if Universal Pictures ever decided to make a Harry sequel, he might consider donning the Bigfoot costume one more time. "I don't see how they could make HARRY II without me," he said. "Where would they find somebody big enough who has the sensitivity and the comic touches to play him without stealing every scene? The hardest part about playing Harry was to keep him in perspective with the rest of the cast. It's possible to steal every scene if you want to." □

The Spielberg magic simply failed to work this time out

HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS

A Universal release of a Universal/Amblin Entertainment production. 6/87, 110 mins. In color & Dolby. Producers, Richard Vane & William Dear. Director, Dear. Screenplay, Dear, William E. Martin, & Ezra D. Rappaport. Director of photography, Allen Daviau. Editor, Donn Cambern. Music, Bruce Broughton. Sound, Willie Burton. "Harry" design, Rick Baker. Production design, James Bissell. Art director, Don Woodruff. Set designer, William James Teegarden.

George Henderson	John Lithgow
Nancy Henderson	Melinda Dillon
Sarah Henderson	Margaret Langrick
Ernie Henderson	Joshua Rudoy
Harry	Kevin Peter Hall
Jacques Laffeur	David Suchet
Irene Moffitt	Lainie Kazan
Dr. Wrightwood	Don Ameche

by Kyle Counts

"Ugh," a friend moaned as we exited a screening of HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS. "that was enough to make Norman Vincent Peale gag." I laughed, yet I was surprised at the caustic tone in his voice. This was, after all, a person who had raved about E.T. when the craggy, pint-sized alien was the big genre event of the summer of '82.

Judging by the public's ambivalent response to the film, my friend was not alone in his dismissal of this good-natured but exceedingly bland summer offering from Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment (in conjunction with Universal). Universal switched ad campaigns after a soft opening week (suddenly America was "Just wild about Harry!"), and by early July the film had been demoted to second-class status as the bottom-half of a smattering of double bills. Boxoffice was far below projected grosses.

So what went wrong? From a critical standpoint, enough. But the movie's problems were only partially responsible, I think, for its poor showing. More significantly, its surprising failure was a reflection of the ever-changing mood of American movie audiences. More on that in a minute.

Directed by William Dear (TIMERIDER and the overrated "Mummy, Daddy" episode of AMAZING STORIES), HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS takes us back to the "average American family caught in extraordinary circumstances" setting of which Spielberg is so fond. The family,

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## Director William Dear on the making of HARRY & THE HENDERSONS

By **Dann Gire**

When William Dear met Bill Martin at a party back in 1978, Dear had no idea that nine years later, he'd be directing a movie based on a story concept Martin tossed out over cocktails. HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS started out as wishful thinking, but that was before fate—and Steven Spielberg—intervened.

In the '70s, Dear was a successful advertising and industrial filmmaker with dreams of becoming a feature film director. He got his first shot at Hollywood when Paul Schrader hired him as second unit director on BLUE COLLAR and HARD CORE. Then, Michael Nesmith's Pacifics Arts video company put together a low-budget film called TIMERIDER: THE ADVENTURE OF LYLE SWANN. Nesmith had been pleased with the way Dear directed his musical short, RIO, a predecessor to today's music videos. So, Dear was hired to direct the Fred Ward movie, which turned out to be a critical disappointment and a commercial failure.

After TIMERIDER I got offered what I call a bunch of junk movies," Dear said. "You know, not the kind of things that distinguish themselves. They were opportunities to do films and it hurt me to say no to them. But films kind of last forever. You really don't want a backlog of junk. So I set about finding a

**Director William Dear, who also co-produced and co-wrote the film.**



project I could really believe in. A movie takes a lot out of you. It takes a year of your life, maybe a year off the end of your life. It's a heavy-duty process to make a motion picture. I wanted a movie that was about something."

Then Dear remembered talking to Martin back in 1978. Martin told him he'd been working on a comedy script about a friendly sasquatch who moves in with a typical American family. He called it HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS. "It sounded like a charming idea," Dear said. "In 1984, I met Martin again and I asked him whatever happened to HARRY? He said, 'It's in a drawer someplace.' It took him two days to find the script. In the original situation outlined by Martin and Ezra Rappaport, the Hendersons bump into Harry, bring him home. He finds some Nair and rubs it on his face and becomes like the big dumb cousin that comes for a visit and never leaves. In a television situation it would have been something like THE ADDAMS FAMILY or THE MUNSTERS. That kind of 'Oh, oh, better hide him because here come the neighbors.'

"Martin had thought of it as a sitcom idea," Dear continued. "I always thought of it as a bigger picture, no pun there. I acquired HARRY and went about trying to get it up to snuff, trying to get it into the kind of story that would make people want to leave their homes and go see it. It became very much a labor of love. I was only 40 pages into the screenplay when I approached Rick Baker. Here I was, knocking on his front door with a few pages of script and he's working on big projects for major studios."

Baker, the Oscar-winning makeup artist from AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON fame, initially declined to help Dear because of his tremendous workload. But something—Dear said it was the look of determination in his own face—convinced Baker to design the creature for Dear's film. It was Dear's intention to have the entire HARRY project packaged and ready to shoot. That way, Dear reasoned, no studio that picked up HARRY could come in with "suggestions on how Harry would look or who would play the roles.



**At home with Harry: Margaret Langrick, Joshua Rudoy, Melinda Dillon John Lithgow. A TV sitcom transplanted to the big screen by director William Dear.**

"The screenplay was done. The creature was designed. I was ready to go. But then I needed somewhere to take the project," Dear said. E.T. cinematographer Allen Daviau played an important role in this phase of the production. He recommended Dear to direct the "Mummy, Daddy" segment of Spielberg's AMAZING STORIES TV series. Dear didn't just direct the script, he reshaped it by adding a second mummy character not in the original story. Spielberg liked the segment well enough to comment, "You should be making movies! What would you like to do?"

And so, Spielberg's Amblin Productions took charge of HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS. It might have been a totally happy ending except for one problem. Baker and Spielberg still had old wounds from a clash over the never-realized NIGHT SKIES project, the one which eventually became E.T. Allegedly, Spielberg had locked all the studio doors to Baker, who parted from Amblin on rather unamiable terms (13:2:24).

"Baker told me he didn't know how that was going to affect the working relationship with Spielberg," Dear said. "I just told him, 'Well, here's the opportunity to make the movie in the best of situations. But I'm not going to turn on you because I have an opportunity to make a movie here.' Baker and I were working on this from the start. If nothing

could be resolved, then Baker and I would have gone somewhere else to make the movie. This industry is full of enemies one day/best friends the next. Those things are repairable with a conversation. Those things can be worked out."

And they were. Amblin gave the film a green light. Spielberg and Baker kissed and made up. But the road to HARRY had its share of false starts, including a reluctance on the part of actor John Lithgow to play the main character, George Henderson.

"I wrote the screenplay for Lithgow and that's a very dangerous thing to do," Dear said. "I very consciously did not want this to be a relationship story between a big creature and a little child. In a way, this really is a buddy picture. It's a story about George and Harry. Harry alters George's values and in turn, this alters the values George instills in his son, Ernie. Anyway, Lithgow is one of those actors that everyone respects and loves but nobody knows his name. The studio wanted a star that was more recognizable. I fought for Lithgow."

"Then, after all that, Lithgow turned down the first draft I gave him. It broke my heart. We had a discussion afterward and he told me that he felt that the character at times was called upon to act too ridiculous. Here we were at a table and he was turning me down and all I could think of was

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# Cartoon-cute character hardly fits the grimy, vile life of a rat

## RATBOY

A Warner Bros release of a Malpasco production. 10/86, 104 mins. In color. Producer, Fritz Manes. Director, Sondra Locke. Screenplay, Rob Thompson. Director of photography, Bruce Surtees. Editor, Joel Cox. Music, Lennie Niehaus. Production designer, Edward Carfagno. Set designer, Bob Sessa. Set decorator, Cloudia. Ratboy design, Rick Baker. Sound, C. Darin Knight. Associate producers, David Valdes & Rob Thompson.

Nikki Morrison	Sondra Locke
Manny	Robert Townsend
Acting coach	Christopher Hewitt
Jewell	Larry Hankin
Dial-A-Prayer	Sydney Lassick
Billy Morrison	Gerrit Graham
Omer Morrison	Louie Anderson
Ratboy	S. I. Baird
Ratboy's voice	Gordon Anderson

by Allen Malmquist

The "Unusual-creature-need-ing-help" storyline drifts in two dominant directions: towards sympathy and emotion, reacting to mankind's lack of understanding, such as in *THE ELEPHANT MAN*, or towards humor, juxtapositioning alien ways with our own, as in *E.T.* *RATBOY*, however, filters out the former's sensitivity without substituting the latter's playful energy. The already overlapping styles of these two films becomes here a swirling mass of stuff, this tossed in, that tossed in, with no particular cohesion and no driving force. Produced by Clint Eastwood's Malpasco company and directed by Eastwood's girlfriend Sondra

Locke, the film has received only a token release from Warner Bros.

Early atmospheric sets of dilapidated shadow portend the appearance of Ratboy, an unexplained hybrid who lives in a junkyard. But his actual introduction fails to carry this style through. Because this film never establishes the grimy, vile life of a rat, the strong sympathy its main character could elicit never materializes. In many ways, the boy, named "Eugene," resembles not a live scavenger rodent, but a cartoon-cute character. The actress and her costume say "plump little mouse," not "skinny rat;" the movements, aside from a token scurry, sniff, and snap, don't resemble a rat or a boy; noises and speaking voice sound whiny-cute.

He acts that way too. For this film, instead of developing any character for Eugene, any real emotion which would generate sympathy and or care, instead focuses upon Nikki, played by Locke, the woman who "discovered" this ratboy, and the way she and others use him. Having people take advantage of him cannot alone elicit the empathy a fictional character needs: something in that individual must win the audience over. But Eugene, all along, is just



Louie Anderson (l) and Sondra Locke (r) play a brother and sister who seek to exploit the looks of RATBOY (Sharon L. Baird), a pathetically deformed misfit.

an annoying ugly kid with a crush on an older woman. In the few scenes where strong feeling seems to be a goal, a dull attempt at humor or an inappropriately blaring rock song interrupts.

Louie Anderson as Omer, Nikki's brother, adds style to lifeless lines, but this fellow, doing stand-up sit-down comedy on a number of television programs, has proved himself capable of far more. Concurrently, black actor Robert (HOLLYWOOD SHUFFLE)

Townsend as Manny adds flair to a fairly stale "jive" role. Christopher Hewitt (*MR. BELVA-DERE*) is wasted as an acting coach. Any talent they, or Sondra Locke, or any other cast member possesses gets washed away by the bland script written by Rob Thompson. Funny actors need funny things to do in funny contexts.

Character development need be believable in its own context, a difficult task in a film which develops neither its emotion nor humor, thus lacking a context, also lacking believable or emphatic characters. Out of the blue, Nikki explains herself and the movie to Eugene in a speech—the easiest, driest, least effective way to get ideas across in a visual medium. It seems like someone saw that the movie was coming to an end and things needed wrapping up.

The film's depressing theme stems from having the creature return to his own place: *E.T.* escaped a particular scientific community which might have harmed him and returned to life among his own people. But the Ratboy comes from a lonely depressing, scavenger life; Nikki smiles as if his return to the wilds is all for the best. Yes, people have used Eugene throughout for their own gain, but does this film really mean to be so down-hearted in the final analysis as to say that no place at all in our society can be found for this boy, no kindness, not even of semi-isolated comfort? More likely, the filmmakers just clung to their formulaic common story ending without considering the implications.

## Rick Baker on the makeup design of RATBOY

Actor/director Sondra Locke chose Rick Baker to design the makeup of RATBOY. Baker spent 8 months designing the concept, working closely with actor Sharon Baird. Baker's initial designs were more elaborately fantastic and rat-like, and were modified under the guidance of Locke toward the final concept which Baker referred to as "more realistic."

"I can't emphasize how important it is to get feedback from the director in a film project like this," said Rick Baker. "Locke was very clear about what she wanted. She had a strong feeling about this character and that really helped us, especially when we got the first prototype completed. Frankly, we went too far. The ratboy had huge



Ratboy, too cute for the loathsome life of a rat.

eyes and the ears were much taller. The ears, in fact, had to be operated mechanically with servo motors. The face was set on and I originally fitted it to myself, which made me aware that at the very least this thing would be torture for an actor to wear. That's when we took the

approach of using makeup."

Baker came up with a simpler design involving dentures, nail and hair implants for hands and feet, prosthetic appliances, contact lenses, and a device to move the nose, manipulated by Baird with her mouth. Baird wore the contacts only 30 minutes at a time.

Greg Nelson handled the makeup's application on the set, which took four hours each day. Baird underwent the makeup process 50 times during the picture's 55-day shooting schedule, spending another hour each day for the makeup's removal. Nelson, who worked for Rob Bottin on *LEGEND*, reused the prosthetic appliances when they could be removed without damage. □

Another high class horror too timid to really shock

THE BELIEVERS

An Orion Pictures release, 6/87, 114 mins. In color & Dolby. Directed by John Schlesinger. Produced by Michael Childers, Beverly Camhe, & Schlesinger. Executive producer, Edward Teets. Screenplay by Mark Frost, based on the novel "The Religion" by Nicholas Conde. Director of photography, Robby Muller. Editor, Peter Honess. Music, J. Peter Robinson. Production design, Simon Holland. Art direction, John Kasarda & Carol Spier. Set decoration, Susan Bode & Elinor Rose Galbraith. Costume designer, Shay Cunliffe. Sound, Nicholas Stevenson. Second unit directors, Michael Childers & Patrick Crowley. Second unit camera, Peter Norman. Casting, Donna Isaacson, John Lyons, Maria Armstrong, & Ross Clydesdale.

Cal Jamison	Martin Sheen
Jessica Haldiday	Helen Shaver
Chris Jamison	Harley Cross
Lt. Sean McTaggart	Robert Loggia
Kate Maslow	Elizabeth Wilson
Donald Calder	Harris Yulin
Dennis Maslow	Lee Richardson
Marty Wertheimer	Richard Masur
Mrs. Ruiz	Carla Pinza
Tom Lopez	Jimmy Smits

by Dean Lamanna

High-class horror thrillers that really deliver are hard to come by these days. For every ten or so efforts on the order of Alan Parker's ANGEL HEART or Stanley Kubrick's THE SHINING, we get maybe one that succeeds like THE EXORCIST. Let's face it, the occult theme has been augmented and reworked *ad nauseam*; at this point it all boils down to how effectively the familiar is warmed over and dished out. On the surface, John Schlesinger's THE BELIEVERS appears to have all the necessary ingredients: a dash of disturbing, deftly-handled violence, a dollop of involving character relationships, and a distinctive visual flavor that doesn't quit.

New York, as the plot would have it, is in the grip of an ancient, voodooistic religion called Santeeria whose secret practitioners are the city's elite. The fact that Santeeria is a normally benevolent faith practiced today by some three million Americans adds a rare dose of verisimilitude to the proceedings. The film carefully nurtures an uneasy undercurrent beneath this premise that constantly threatens—but ultimately fails—to cut loose.

Tension reaches a potentially explosive pitch about midway through when, at a political fundraiser for a respected magnate who also happens to be the cult's leader, Martin Sheen sees his

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Director John Schlesinger on making THE BELIEVERS

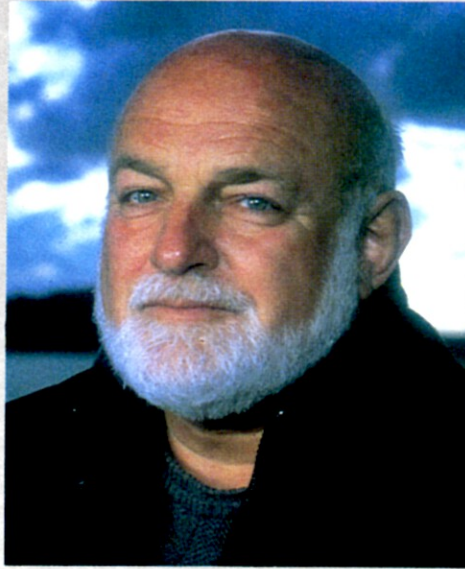
By Dan Scapperotti

Director John Schlesinger said he was attracted to *The Religion*, a novel by Nicholas Conde on which THE BELIEVERS was based, because he felt it would be very cinematic. The director undertook a complete restructuring of the book with screenwriter Mark Frost that took almost a year. The focal point of the story is Santeeria, an African religion transported to the New World by slaves which is practiced by over 250,000 people in New York City alone.

Schlesinger did extensive research into "the religion," as it is referred to by its practitioners. Initially the book's authors helped with the research. Schlesinger pointed out that Nicholas Conde is a pseudonym for two writers who had researched the book by conducting interviews.

"We realized early on that there was a closed door to any of us who just walked into a botanica in East Harlem and asked what certain things were used for," said the director. "Information is quite hard to get until they trust you. I suspect that Santeeria is surrounded by so much secrecy just because of tradition. We began to gather some facts, much of which came from our actors themselves. Carla Pinza, who plays maid Carla Ruiz in the film, became our advisor. She herself is an initiate priestess of Santeeria.

"I became intrigued by the whole thing," Schlesinger



Director John Schlesinger.

added. "Not that I believe in it myself. I feel quite secure with my own beliefs. But I didn't want in any way to misrepresent their religion for theatrical reasons." Schlesinger stressed in the film that Santeeria is a force for good. It is Brueria, the practice of black magic, that is at the root of the story's evil.

The film was carefully plotted by Schlesinger to avoid gratuitous blood or violence. "I wanted to make an audience film," he said, "I wanted them to leave on the edge of their seats. I don't like slasher films. I don't go to them and I don't make them. I am interested in the dark side of things like a lot of directors are. We did the film with as much good taste as we could, but we knew that we would have to present certain visceral shocks."

One of the more horrifying moments on screen is when

Helen Shaver has a group of spiders hatch from inside her face. The effect was created by Kevin Hayney after extensive experimentation. Makeup master Dick Smith recommended Hayney, one of his former students, for the job. Smith had worked with Schlesinger on both MIDNIGHT COWBOY and MARATHON MAN.

The spider sequence was considerably longer originally. "The scene became more of a fantasy," explained Schlesinger, "once they came out of her face. She imagined she was covered in spiders and everything in the room was alive with spiders. I cut it all because it just

seemed too much. We thought that we had such a horrifying moment that we didn't need more. The only shot that remains from that part is the one spider on the telephone cord which was a rather large tarantula."

Shaver's bursting blister had to be very carefully arranged. Using a pair of tweezers, the spiders were placed in the orifice of a small tube. A jet of air was used to push the spiders out of the wound. "We put two spiders in because we thought that two coming out in one shot would be more frightening," said Schlesinger. "The person who was the bravest and most professional of all was actor Helen Shaver. It was one of the requirements of the role. We couldn't do it with mechanical spiders and we couldn't do it with doubles."

A character not found in the book is Calder, Martin Sheen's attorney friend, played winningly by Richard Masur. The likable role became popular with audiences, but the character's fate after being struck by a poison dart is a bit ambiguous in the film. "Does the lawyer die?" mused Schlesinger. "People all want to know that. He doesn't actually die. I didn't want to clutter the end when they escape, carrying the child. Looking back, maybe it wouldn't have mattered if there was a third person in the scene. What we didn't want to do was

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Family friend Lee Richardson (l) and cult leader Harris Yulin (r) exhort Martin Sheen to take the life of his son during the film's climactic ritual.



*A shabby sequel, but Christopher Reeve soars*

**SUPERMAN IV:  
THE QUEST FOR PEACE**

A Warner Bros. release of a Cannon Group/Golan-Globus production. 7/87, 89 mins. In color & Dolby. Director, Sidney J. Furie. Producers, Menachem Golan & Yoram Globus. Executive producer, Michael Kagan. Screenplay by Lawrence Konner & Mark Rosenthal. Story by Konner, Rosenthal, & Christopher Reeve. Director of photography, Ernest Day. Editor, John Shirley. Music, John Williams. Music adapted & conducted by Alexander Courage. Production design, John Graysmark. Art direction, Leslie Tomkins. Set decoration, Peter Young. Costume design, John Bloomfield. Sound, Danny Daniel. Visual effects supervisor, Harrison Ellenshaw. Special effects supervisor, John Evans. Model effects supervisor, Richard Conway. Flying unit director, David Lane. Flying second unit directors, Lane, Ellenshaw, & Reeve.

Superman/Clark Kent ..... Christopher Reeve  
Lex Luthor ..... Gene Hackman  
Perry White ..... Jackie Cooper  
Jimmy Olsen ..... Marc McClure  
Lenny ..... Jon Cryer  
David Warfield ..... Sam Wanamaker  
Nuclear Man #2 ..... Mark Pillow  
Lacy Warfield ..... Mariel Hemingway  
Lois Lane ..... Margot Kidder

by Harry McCracken

During Christopher Reeve's self-imposed retirement from the role that made him famous, he made his reasons for his decision resolutely clear: the SUPERMAN series had gone as far as it could, he said, and a further sequel would merely be a rehash of what had gone before. Now Reeve has made a belated return to his secret identities of Superman and Clark Kent, lured by co-screenwriter status, and proved himself right in the first place. SUPERMAN IV: THE QUEST FOR PEACE is just what he predicted it would be, a pallid echo of a movie that imitates the earlier films often but only occasionally equals their excellence.

You'd think that a film in which Superman tackles the world's weightiest issue—the nuclear arms race—would be if nothing else a change of pace from the



Nuclear Man (Mark Pillow) creates havoc for Superman at China's Great Wall.

light-hearted fantasy of the prior films in the series. Would Superman suffer any pangs of doubt about making so awesome a decision as to destroy the world's nuclear stockpiles? Would the superpowers cheerfully accept the Man of Steel's move? If they didn't, could even the combined might of the U.S. and the Soviet Union stop him?

Watching SUPERMAN IV, you slowly realize that Lawrence Konner and Mark Rosenthal's screenplay isn't going to tackle any of these tricky questions. Superman simply chucks the weapons into the sun, with no reference to (political) fallout on earth; his battle here is not against atomic weaponry so much as his old nemesis Lex Luthor (Gene Hackman) and the synthetic supervillain Nuclear Man (Mark Pillow) that Luthor clones from Superman.

Nuclear Man's brawn and superpowers only partially allay a long-standing flaw of the Superman films: a lack of strong adversaries for the Man of Steel to combat. Luthor, in the films (unlike the comics) a bumbling goofball, has never been a very formidable villain; only SUPERMAN II, in which he played second banana to the Phantom Zone criminals, gave Superman the kind of high powered foes he rightly deserves. Luthor's return for a third time contributes little to SUPERMAN IV except a star's name for the credits. His one-liners are feeble, and Hackman's performance is subdued in comparison with his earlier outings in the role.

In general, the film's lack of inspiration turns viewing it into a kind of grim comparative exercise. The Superman-Lois Lane romantic flight was done better in SUPERMAN I; the Metropolis battle climaxing in Superman's apparent death was more thrilling in II; the big-business satire was sharper in III. And so on. Significantly, the film's best extended sequence—a double date between Superman and Lois, and Clark and new *Daily Planet* publisher Lacy Warfield (Mariel Hemingway), is also its most original.

New series producers Menachem Golan and Yoram Globus have not upgraded their aesthetic aspirations with their graduation to big-budgeted would-be blockbusters like this film and the Stallone bomb OVER THE TOP; they bring to SUPERMAN IV a schlocky atmosphere more reminiscent of the Salkinds' last super-

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**Harrison Ellenshaw on visual effects for SUPERMAN IV**

By Kris Gilpin

All of the approximately 500 special effects shots for the latest SUPERMAN adventure were supervised by Harrison Ellenshaw, a veteran matte artist and visual effects consultant on such films as STAR WARS, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, and SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES. His work on SUPERMAN IV involved supervision of miniatures, effects animation, traveling matte/blue-screen shots, and a number of matte paintings and composites. With an effects budget of about \$3½ million and a total crew of around 100, the effects on the film took seven months to complete.

The film—and its effects—were panned by most reviewers for having a threadbare, shoddy look. The flying effects in particular were singled out for their lack of quality. Observed *Variety*, they "look notably cheesier than in earlier installments." The reason? Instead of using front projection to composite the flying scenes as on the first three films, SUPERMAN IV used blue screen traveling mattes. The rumor in London was that Cannon wanted to use the front projection equipment from the earlier films but couldn't as a result of their deal for the sequel rights with original producers Alexander and Ilya Salkind, who maintained the

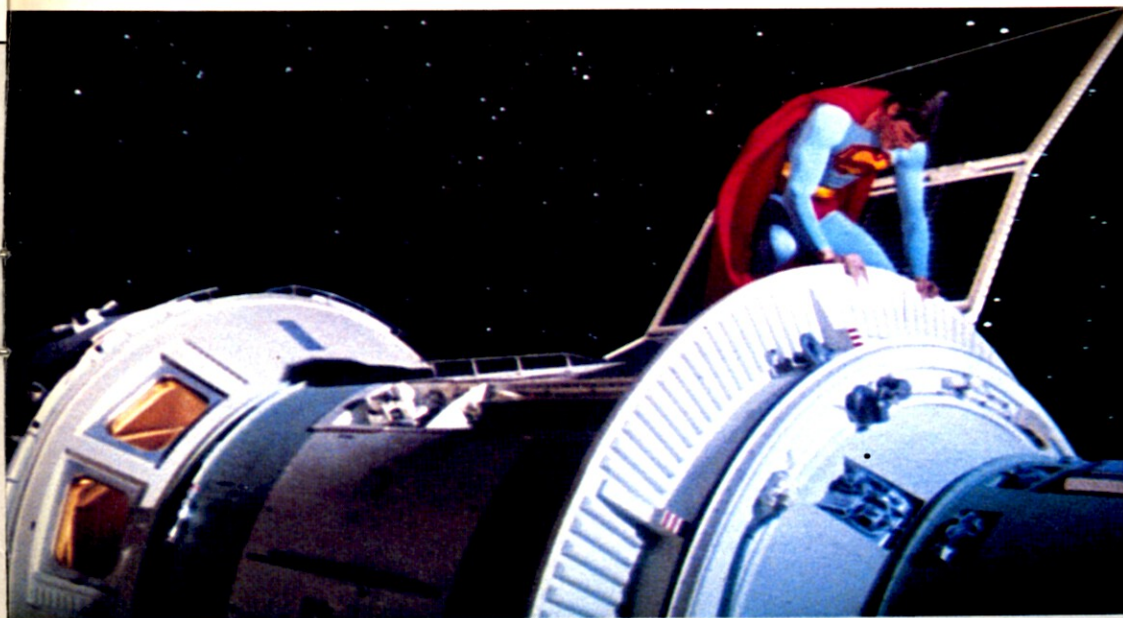
A Nuclear Man miniature for flying scenes shot at Elstree studio using a motion control system by David McCall.



Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) is surprised when Superman lets her fly on her own. The use of blue screen for flying effects resulted in color balance problems.







Superman rescues a Soviet space ship while on patrol (inset) at the film's opening. Unlike previous films in the series, **SUPERMAN IV** used blue screen traveling mattes to create flying effects.



equipment was the property of **SANTA CLAUS—THE MOVIE**.

Ellenshaw said he and his crew decided to shun front-projection for a number of reasons. One was due to the fact that, because of the amount of flying scenes, "front-screen projection would have been time consuming and tedious to do. The new picture was made in about a year, which was around half the time it took to make each of the other three movies, and one is able to shoot far more set-ups a day on blue screen than you can with front projection. I think it's a little bit more forgiving and flexible, also. We had 250 blue screen composites in the film; that's a ton and a lot of them were daytime composites. We were very fortunate we had the use of almost every optical printer in town; we went to 11 different optical houses. But you're still looking at a big quantity of blue screen composites, and it's a tough thing to pull off."

Ellenshaw said the filmmakers tried to make Superman's aerial moves more dynamic in this picture, and at one point

discarded the idea of animating jet contrails behind our hero to suggest a greater sense of motion and speed. There are, however, more forward motion shots of him flying up past the camera now, a move that's hard to do with front projection.

Remembering the romantic, in-flight sequence between Superman and Lois Lane from the original film, director Sidney J. Furie (**THE ENTITY**, **THE IPCRESS FILE**) had a similar

incident written into the script for **SUPERMAN IV**, which resulted in 44 extra special effects shots for Ellenshaw's team. "That sequence was a monster," he smiled. "Doing it blue screen we had to time and correct Christopher Reeve's costume to balance the blue in his suit. Lois flew in a pink dress, so any little variation in color would cause one thing to go out of balance with the other. At one point they fly over a snowy area, which is also kind of tough for compositing. But optical work has become quite sophisticated and I'd say we've had good success with it. If you become conscious of the fact that there are 44 blue screen shots in a row, then we have failed; hopefully you'll be concentrating on their relationship."

"Regarding his leading Superman, Ellenshaw found Christopher Reeve to be "one of the

Model effects supervisor Richard Conway rigs a volcano miniature on the Elstree studio backlot for the scene (right) where Superman caps it with a mountaintop.



easiest people to work with, and one of the most co-operative. He knows the right body movements when flying, and when to shift his weight."

More successful than the blue screen work is Ellenshaw's effects animation for Nuclear Man and the miniature work of Richard Conway. A big effects sequence showing the creation of a prototype Nuclear Man played by Clive Mantle who is easily defeated by Superman was dropped from the film. "He is created from a small dot up into Nuclear Man," said Ellenshaw, describing the sequence. "He has electrical discharges and is able to throw what we call fireballs, along with having other animated powers." Ellenshaw used similar effects on the second, more powerful Nuclear Man, played by Mark Pillow.

Ellenshaw realizes that not all of the effects in **SUPERMAN IV** work, but is cautiously optimistic about the film. "I'm always an optimist," he said. "You have to be on every show. But let's face it, the person it's really all up to is the writer; we're kind of in their hands. The effects are always the icing on the cake, and it's the cake that counts. With **SUPERMAN IV** I think we've got a good 'A'; I think we've got an 85% success rate on this film." □



# A wheezing, arthritic spoof of STAR WARS, lacking in wit

## SPACEBALLS

An MGM/UA Communications release from MGM Pictures of a Brooksfilm presentation. 6/87, 96 mins. In color & Dolby. Producer, Mel Brooks. Co-producer, Ezra Swerdlow. Director, Brooks. Screenplay, Brooks, Thomas Meehan, & Ronny Graham. Director of photography, Nick McLean. Editor, Conrad Buff. Additional editing, Nicholas C. Smith. Music, John Morris. Production design, Terence Marsh. Art director, Harold Michelson. Set designers, Peter Kelly, Richard McKenzie, & Jacques Valin. Set decorator, John Franco, Jr. Sound, Randy Thom & Gary Rydstrom. Special visual effects, Apogee. Visual effects supervisor, Peter Donen.

President Skroob .....	Mel Brooks
Yogurt .....	Mel Brooks
Barf .....	John Candy
Dark Helmet .....	Rick Moranis
Lone Starr .....	Bill Pullman
Princess Vespa .....	Daphne Zuniga
King Roland .....	Dick Van Patten
Colonel Sandurz .....	George Wyner
Voice of Dot Matrix .....	Joan Rivers
Dot Matrix .....	Lorene Yarnell

by Kyle Counts

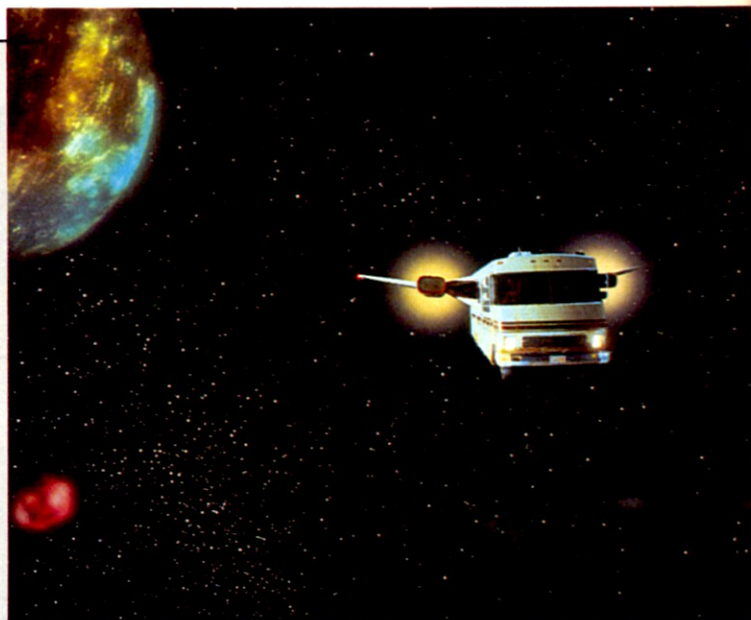
"Nonsense that doesn't quite come off is the dreariest stuff in the world," writer E. B. White once observed. He might have been talking about SPACEBALLS, Mel Brooks' wheezing, arthritic spoof of STAR WARS (with nods to STAR TREK, ALIEN, PLANET OF THE APES, and a few others).

Considering that some of Brooks' funniest works have been parodies (YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN being the best), the dreariness of SPACEBALLS comes as rather a shock. (And the shock, like the movie, comes ten years too late. Fosselius and Wiese beat Brooks to the punch in HARDWARE WARS, their humorous 13-minute spoof of STAR WARS made in 1978.) STAR WARS

(and its resulting imitators) would seem to offer the adroit satirist a wealth of opportunities for laughs, both verbal and visual. But this costly, inflated SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE sketch is like watching a talent revue staged by rank amateurs; instead of taking on the genre as a whole, Brooks and co-scenarists Thomas Meehan and Ronny Graham have merely copied the structure of STAR WARS and dressed it with flaccid vaudevillian schtick—a poor substitute for wit and originality.

We giggle now and then and occasionally chuckle with recognition when the filmmakers lampoon a familiar cliché (like the ridiculously overdetailed starship that ever-so-slowly moves past the camera in the film's opening). And once in a great while we laugh out loud when there's a joyful collision of the raucous and the sublime (John Hurt's chest-burster breaking into song and dance, courtesy of Chuck Jones' "One Froggy Evening").

But more often than not one feels belittled by the low standard of the film's humor ("I'm so excited I couldn't hold my oil," cracks Joan Rivers as the robot companion Dot Matrix) and embarrassed that a veteran of Brooks' ability would feel the need to repeatedly resort to the most puerile of puns to squeeze out laughs. (When the hero



Lone Star's Eagle 5 spacegoing Winnebago. Brooks sought STAR WARS quality effects but never quite solved the problem of how to make them funny.

## Peter Donen on supervising the visual effects of SPACEBALLS at Apogee

By Ron Magid

Mel Brooks selected Peter Donen to supervise the visual effects of SPACEBALLS. Formerly based at Cinema Research, Donen supervised effects for films like ALTERED STATES and WAVELENGTH. Brooks brought Donen in at the script stage to see if the planned humor was worth the effects expense.

"Some of the jokes were simpler to do than Mel thought," said Donen. "He'd say, 'Great, let's do two of them!' Some were more complicated and expensive than he thought. He'd say, 'That's not a \$50,000 joke, it's only a \$25,000 joke. If you can figure out a way to do it for \$25,000 we'll keep it in the movie, otherwise lose it. I'm not going to sell \$50,000 worth of tickets for that joke.'"

In June 1986, nearly a year before the film's planned release, Donen selected Grant McCune to build the miniatures for SPACEBALLS. McCune, who made models for STAR WARS, heads up the model shop at John Dykstra's Apogee Effects. "We hadn't yet decided whether to set up a facility of our own or to hire an existing effects facility to handle the huge workload," said Donen. "We felt if we decided to do the effects in-house that we'd lose a lot of sleep over it, so it came down to Apogee."

In addition to Apogee, ILM was hired to create the effects for the ALIEN-inspired chestbuster

sequence, Bill Taylor's Illusion Arts was given the assignment for the film's matte paintings, and Available Light Ltd was brought in to supply animation effects.

Donen began filming effects at Apogee before Brooks started the principal photography in order to meet the film's June release date. As the work progressed, 150 planned effects shots mushroomed to over 200. "After adding those fifty shots the budget increased less than 10%," beamed Donen. "And we were still able to finish it all in less time than originally agreed upon!" Donen pegged the economy and efficiency at Apogee to technological developments like putting video camera taps onto the motion control cameras used to film the space-ships. "The video process gave us the capacity to view these shots almost instantly," he said.

Keeping a balanced sense of the absurd was one of the SPACEBALLS effects crew's greatest challenges. "All along," recalls Donen, "we kept reminding ourselves that this is a comedy. As effects technicians, we are very easily wrapped up in trying to capture the beauty of spaceflight, for example, but we didn't let that happen on this picture. We were trying to do BLAZING SADDLES as space opera, so everything in this film had to be done with humor."

Visual effects art director Stephen Dane translated the spaceship designs of production

Barf, Dot Matrix, the Princess and Lone Star cower before a statue of Yogurt, a Brooks parody of THE WIZARD OF OZ, gorgeously designed by Terry Marsh.

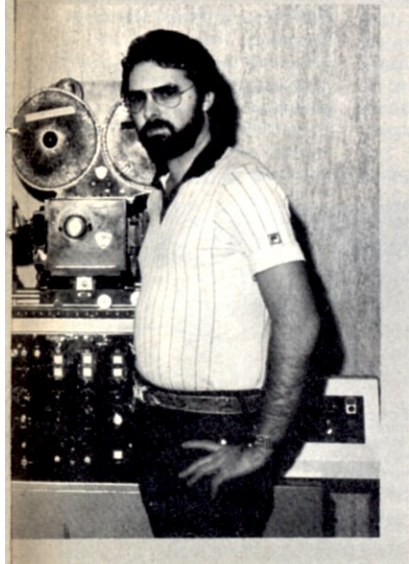


designer Terry Marsh and art director Harold Michelson into blueprints for construction. At seventeen feet in length, the Spaceball Cruiser is one of the largest models ever built. "There was an incredible amount of detail," chief modelmaker McCune moaned in mock agony. "But that's what makes it funny—it's the epitome of all the modelmaking that's gone on since 2001." In many ways even more difficult to build and shoot were hero Lone Starr's Eagle 5, a starcrossed Winnebago, and the Princess Vespa's Honeymoon Coupe. Both craft had to match exactly with full-scale functional vehicles.

Satirizing the effects of other genre films meant Apogee's task was mostly to duplicate what had been done before. That made for a certain feeling of nostalgia for most of the crew which had worked on many of the original pictures, from STAR WARS to STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE. It was just ten years ago that STAR WARS revolutionized the field of special effects. How quickly the state-of-the-art has become the status quo. The "traditional" effects of SPACEBALLS are exactly the same type of effects that forced John Dykstra and Richard Edlund *et al.* to reinvent the effects field in 1977. Today they are commonplace.

"The effects in the film are straightforward in the sense that we didn't need to do a lot of R&D to satirize and parody this genre," Donen said. "We're not talking about a new bang for nine year olds. The bang an audience gets out of this movie should be a sideache from laughing." □

Effects supervisor Peter Donen.



Mel Brooks played Yogurt on knee pads in a nicely designed makeup supervised by Ben Nye, Jr. and applied by Ken Diaz.



decides to "jam the radar," a giant jar of raspberry jam smashes into the enemy's radar dish.) Brooks doesn't abandon even the bad gags without a fight: it's not above him to milk the joke by employing multiple cuts or a nudge-nudge, wink-wink close-up, just in case we missed the point. (When soldiers are ordered to "Comb the desert!" in search of the Princess, we are treated to three different shots of the teams of men pushing giant Ace combs, the latter the long-toothed type used for black hair, a black cadet at the helm. Get it?) By adorning his schtick with neon signs, Brooks takes the guesswork—and the fun—out of comedy.

In a disaster of such magnitude, there are virtues to be found, but even they are inconsistent. Rick Moranis as Dark Helmet, stand-ins for Darth Vader and Chewbacca, are outstanding second bananas, but here they have little to do (though Moranis shines in a scene wherein the ego-deflated Helmet plays behind closed doors with his SPACEBALLS action figures, mimicking the characters' voices); Daphne Zuniga as Princess Vespa makes an attractive, resilient heroine (in her best scene, she wipes out an entire army after one of them sings her hairdo with a stray laser beam), yet she's obviously just doing a job here.

Terence Marsh's production

design is alternately chintzy and impressive (the underground lair of Mel Brooks as the diminutive sage Yogurt is a good example of the latter), ditto Donfeld's costumes (contrast Vespa's wedding dress with the five-and-dime garb worn by the Dinks, the Jawa-like servants of Yogurt). And John Morris' score, a synthesis of movie music and space themes, is never as rousing or colorful as it could be. Effects-wise, we've seen these star fields and flying model kits before, though there are two outstanding miniature shots of

the kingdom of Druidia (Grant McCune was chief modelmaker), with mattes by Syd (spelled "Sid" in the film's credits) Dutton and Bill Taylor.

My advice to Brooks: don't strike the SPACEBALL sets just yet. I for one didn't take it as a joke when Yogurt tells hero Lone Starr and his pals: "Perhaps we'll all meet again in the sequel—SPACEBALLS: THE SEARCH FOR MORE MONEY."

If we can no longer admire Brooks for his movies, we can at least admire his honesty. □

Colonel Sandurz (George Wyner) and Dark Helmet (Rick Moranis) on the bridge of Spaceball One, a threadbare and unimaginative design that dampens the humor.



# FILM RATINGS

## AMAZON WOMEN ON THE MOON

Directed by John Landis, Joe Dante, Carl Gottlieb, Peter Horton, Robert K. Weiss. Universal, 9/87, 90 mins. With: lots of actors.

After almost a year on the shelf, Universal has decided to release this wacky potpourri of skits. Their effectiveness will depend on your personal tastes. Title skit is the weaker entry—too exact a duplication of the SF epics of the '50s it parodies to be really funny. "Pethouse Video" is a joy for voyeurs. John Landis' "Video Date" and "Blacks Without Soul" are fun, as is Joe Dante's "Critics Corner." Was Jack the Ripper actually the Loch Ness Monster? Find out in "Bull Shit or Not." The hilarious "Son of the Invisible Man" offers a recreation of the classic film, except the naked invisible man has made a terrible mistake—he's not invisible! Okay fun that will probably hit big on video. ●●DS

## BATES MOTEL

Directed by Richard Rothstein. NBC-TV, 7/87, 120 mins. With: Bud Cort, Lori Petty, Moses Gunn, Jason Bateman.

This made-for-TV sequel to Hitchcock's *PSYCHO* picks up in 1960 Fairville, CA, immediately following the events chronicled by the original. Brushing aside the two recent theatrical sequels, but borrowing elements from both—including the convoluted "Guess who's Mrs. Bates?" costume party from II and the looney female love interest from III—the story's first half wisely spot-

**Bud Cort (r) and Lori Petty see spooks at the BATES MOTEL.**



Fifties comedy nostalgia in *AMAZON WOMEN ON THE MOON*.

lights Cort's jittery, bug-eyed performance, a worthy successor to Tony Perkins'. Unfortunately, things go gushy in the latter half when a disconsolate divorcee checks in with an urge to slit her wrists, only to be rescued by a party of bobby-soxed ghosts from the 1950s.

True star of the show is The House, which has long resisted the temptation of Sears Weatherbeater to become America's premiere Gothic residence. Fantasy fans may owe a debt to NBC for its efforts to revive the genre on television of late; still, Mother must be turning in her grave. ●Dean Lamanna

## BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Directed by Richard Franklin. CBS-TV/Republic Pictures, 9/87, 60 mins. With: Linda Hamilton, Ron Perlman, Roy Dotrice.

This lumpy update of the classic fairy tale, a fall pilot aimed squarely at the youth market, wins points for at least taking its premise seriously. There hasn't been a dumb idea played this straight since the Hammer *DRACULA* sequels of the late '60s. Unlike them, it doesn't have the benefit of Christopher Lee. Instead, Ron Perlman is the beast, a sort of upright lion-man with tattered clothes and a short mane, who saves the life of a female assistant D.A., played by *THE TERMINATOR*'s Linda Hamilton.

The beast makeup is good, and Hamilton is appealing as always, but the plot huffs and puffs from one cliché to another. The weekly gimmick has Hamilton shielding the beast in his subterranean lair under New York, while he protects her from more conventional urban villains. Roy Dotrice drifts in and out as the creature's mysterious keeper. The pilot episode had brief glimmers of potential, all of

them unexplored. ●BK

## THE CURSE

Directed by David Keith. Trans World Entertainment, 8/87, 90 mins. With: Claude Akins, Will Wheaton, John Schneider.

A blazing plasma sphere crashes onto a farm, melts and seeps into the ground affecting the water; fruit rots, people and animals become deformed and deranged, but farmer Claude Akins keeps a lid on the mess because he thinks God is punishing him for his unfaithful wife. Actor David Keith's directorial debut, known as *THE FARM* during production is well crafted and has some good moments, but is sadly hindered by an absence of logic. No adult in the film shows any common sense. When Akin's wife sports hideous lumps on her face, no one seems to notice. Based on the H. P. Lovecraft story "The Color Out of Space," filmed previously as *DIE, MONSTER, DIE* (1965) with Boris Karloff. ●DS

## THE GARBAGE PAIL KIDS

Directed by Rod Amateau. Atlantic Ent. Group, 8/87, 100 mins. With: Anthony Newley, Mackenzie Astin, Katie Barberi, Ron MacLachlan.

Enormously popular with children but controversial with adults, the gum card series hits the big screen in a live-action movie. Featuring Marlon Brando lookalike (he thinks) Greaser Greg, bladder control problem Nat Nerd, mucous producing Messie Tessie, Windy Winston (self-explanatory), Valerie Vomit (ditto), the horrifying halitosis of baby Foul Phil and eyeball snacking, toe chomping Ali Gator.

Now in their ninth series in just two years, the cards are gross, disgusting and utterly hilarious in their disdain for civilized adult society. Unfortunately 100 minutes of flatu-

lence, piddling, bad breath, and nose wiping does not make for a memorably pleasant time at the flicks. The point made in the story about antique store owner (Anthony Newley) and his young helper (Mackenzie Astin), demonstrating how beauty is only skin deep, is terribly relevant to the shallow, superficial times we live in. But it comes too little and too late to carry any weight.

John Carl Buechler (*TROLL*, *GHOULIES*, *FROM BEYOND*), created the animatronics worn by midget actors, but had his name removed from the advertising (though it still appears in the credits) due to dissatisfaction with the way the work was ill used. ●Gary Kimber

## HELLRAISER

Directed by Clive Barker. New World Pictures, 8/87, 94 mins. With: Andrew Robinson, Clare Higgins, Ashley Laurence.

Novelist-turned-director Clive Barker upstages Stephen King. A mysterious Chinese box is the door to another dimension allowing four malevolent Cenobites to enter this world. The person who summons them in the hope of gaining the height of physical pleasure also earns an eternity of incredible pains well. One of their victims escapes but in a horrible form. As in his books, Barker pulls no punches on screen, making this one of the year's best horror films. ●●●DS

## HORRIBLE HORROR

Directed by David Bergman. Movietime, Inc./Goodtimes Home Video, 1986, 110 mins. With: Zacherley.

Campy fun for genre/video completists only. Zacherley (aka John Zacherle), the dean of '50s horror hosts (he introduced Universal's classic "Shock Theatre" package to New York TV), introduces and occasionally interrupts

this random hodgepodge of bad-movie clips. The catch: apart from the trailers, none of the movies are identified. You've got to be a died-in-the-wool genre buff to make sense of it all. And Zacherley is clearly working without a script. Included are out-takes from *ABBOTT & COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN*, some of the more cheerfully gross moments from Mexico's *THE BRAINIAC*, and *SHE DEMONS*, *HIDEOUS SUN DEMON*, *BRIDE OF THE MONSTER*, and other mostly public domain, pre-gore era drivel. ●BK

## HOUSE II: THE SECOND STORY

Directed by Ethan Wiley. New World Pictures, 8/87, 88 mins. With: Arye Gross, Jonathan Stark, Royal Dano, Bill Maher.

Jesse McLaughlin (Ayre Gross) returns to his ancestral home and decides, in the middle of the night, to dig up the grave of his great, great grandfather (Royal Dano) in the hopes of finding a crystal skull with magical powers. He finds not only the skull, but also Gramps, who is still alive in a mummified state. A variety of evil but dull characters come after the skull, which causes various rooms in the house to open up as doorways to the past. This leads to the introduction of two unnecessary puppet characters created by Chris Walas, an unconvincing baby pterodactyl and a cartoonish caterpillar—half puppy, half caterpillar.

About the only assets the film has are some brief but excellent stop-motion animation by Phil Tippett and Mark Sullivan and Dano's warm performance. Jonathan Stark, so effective as the vampire's henchman in *FRIGHT NIGHT*, doesn't come off as Jesse's good friend Charlie. ●JPH

Royal Dano as Gramps in *HOUSE II: THE SECOND STORY*.



# FILM RATINGS

## JAWS—THE REVENGE

Directed by Joseph Sargent. Universal, 7/87, 80 mins. With: Lorraine Gary, Lance Guest, Mario Van Peebles, Michael Caine.

What do you get when you combine a star (Michael Caine) and a studio (Universal) who are in it strictly for the money? A lousy movie. Add a fake looking monster and a silly plot—Bruce, the shark, is stalking the late Roy Scheider's family up and down the coast—and you're up to your neck in bilge water. Caine staggers through the film in what looks like a state of absolute exhaustion, which isn't surprising, because he shoe-horned this movie between two other features. Director Sargent operates as a referee; he exhibited far more personal style in *COLOSSUS: THE FORBIN PROJECT* and his various TV movies. The special effects stink. ○ BK

## THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS

Directed by John Glen. MGM/UA, 7/87, 130 mins. With: Timothy Dalton, Maryam d'Abo, Jeroen Krabbe, Joe Don Baker.

The good news is we have a new James Bond, and he's better than Roger Moore. Timothy Dalton is lean, mean, relatively humorless, and has a short fuse—the best of 007 since Sean Connery. The bad news is that apart from him the same guys are making the movies. Desmond Llewellyn makes a charming, welcomed return as Q, the gadget master, and Bond's Aston Martin automobile is restored to him, more lethal than ever. But everything else is strictly by the numbers, and for all the money spent, the special effects are sometimes amazingly shoddy, especially the repeated use of process screen rear projection. The movie could have lost 20 minutes without missing a thing, which might have made its incomprehensible narrative line easier to follow. ●● BK

## THE LOST BOYS

Directed by Joel Schumacher. Warner Bros., 7/87, 92 mins. With: Jason Patric, Corey Haim, Dianne Wiest.

This bit of revisionist vampire storytelling from director Joel Schumacher (*ST. ELMO'S FIRE*) has all the fang marks of a popular summer hit, so in terms of boxoffice there's really nothing at, er, stake for Warner Bros. But crispediting, terrific visual effects, and a generally loud soundtrack do little to mask a feeble stab at horror and an even more feeble attempt at social commentary.

Falling somewhere between last year's *VAMP* and 1985's *FRIGHT NIGHT* in overall effectiveness, this contemporary tale of teenaged bat-boys starts out as an allegorical

FILM TITLE	●●●●		●●●		●●		●		○	
	MUST SEE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	MEDIOCRE	POOR					
	VJB	FSC	DF	DG	JPH	BK	DS			
<b>THE ARISTOCATS</b> Wolfgang Reitherman Buena-Vista, (re-release), 78 mins.	●		●●	●●●		●●●	●●			
<b>THE BELIEVERS</b> John Schlesinger Orion, 6/87, 114 mins.	●●	●●●	●●	●	●	●●●	●●●			
<b>CREEPSHOW 2</b> Michael Gornick New World, 5/87, 89 mins.	●	●●	●	●	●	○	●●			
<b>DOLLS</b> Stuart Gordon Empire Pictures, 4/87, 77 mins.		●●	●	●●		●●	●●			
<b>EVIL DEAD 2</b> Sam Raimi Rosebud Releasing, 3/87, 85 mins.	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●●	●	●●	●●			
<b>THE GARBAGE PAIL KIDS MOVIE</b> Rod Amateau, Atl. Ent., 8/87, 100 mins.	○	○	○	○	●	○				
<b>THE GATE</b> Tibor Takacs New Century, 5/87, 92 mins.	●	●		●	●●	●●				
<b>GOthic</b> Ken Russell Vestron, 5/87, 90 mins.	●●		●●●	●	○	○	●			
<b>HARRY &amp; THE HENDERSONS</b> William Dear, Univ., 5/87, 110 mins.	●●	●●		●●●		●	●●			
<b>HOUSE 2: THE SECOND STORY</b> Ethan Wiley, New World, 8/87, 88 mins.	●	●●			○	○	●●			
<b>INNERSPACE</b> Joe Dante Warner Bros., 6/87, 120 mins.	●●	●●	●	●●	●●	●	●●			
<b>JAWS—THE REVENGE</b> Joseph Sargent Universal, 7/87, 80 mins.	○	○		○	○	○				
<b>THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS</b> John Glen MGM/UA, 7/87, 130 mins.	●	●●	●●	●●		●●				
<b>THE LOST BOYS</b> Joel Schumacher Warner Bros., 7/87, 92 mins.	●	●	●●	●	●	●●	●●●			
<b>MAID TO ORDER</b> Amy Jones New Century Vista, 8/87, 96 mins.		○		○		●	●●			
<b>MAKING MR. RIGHT</b> Susan Seidelman Orion, 3/87, 95 mins.	●●	●		●	●	●●	●●			
<b>MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE</b> Gary Goddard, Cannon, 8/87, 106 mins.	○	●●				●	●●			
<b>MAX HEADROOM</b> Philip DeGuere ABC-TV, weekly series, 60 mins.	●●	●●	●●	●●	○	●●●	●			
<b>THE MONSTER SQUAD</b> Fred Dekker Tri-Star, 8/87, 81 mins.	●	●●●	●●	●	●●	●●	●●●			
<b>MY DEMON LOVER</b> Charles Loventhal New Line, 5/87, 81 mins.	●	○		○	●	●	●●			
<b>PREDATOR</b> John McTiernan Fox, 6/87, 107 mins.	●●	●				●	●●			
<b>ROBOCOP</b> Paul Verhoeven Orion, 7/87, 103 mins.	●●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●			
<b>SNOW WHITE &amp; THE SEVEN DWARFS</b> Buena Vista, (re-release), 83 mins.	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●●			
<b>SPACEBALLS</b> Mel Brooks MGM/UA, 6/87, 96 mins.	●	○				●	●●			
<b>SUPERMAN IV</b> Sidney J. Furie Warner Bros., 8/87, 89 mins.	●	●	●●		●●	○				
<b>THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK</b> George Miller, Warner Bros., 6/87, 119 mins.	●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●●	●●	●●			

VJB/Vincent J. Bossone FSC/Frederick S. Clarke DF/Dennis Fischer DG/Dann Gire  
JPH/Judith P. Harris BK/Bill Kelley DL/Dean Lamanna DS/Dan Scapperotti

study of alienated youth but ultimately backs down. Excellent ensemble acting from a diverse cast does something to atone for what could have been a much-needed shot of plasma for serious horror fans. Schumacher succumbs to the same hip silliness that impaired his work on *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN* and demonstrates once again that he has no sincere interest in the genre. ● Dean Lamanna

## THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH

Directed by Robert J. Roth. ABC-TV, 8/87, 120 mins. With: Lewis Smith, Beverly D'Angelo, Bruce McGill, Will Wheaton.

This tops my list of books

that were successfully translated to film and don't require remaking. In this 2-hour pilot for ABC, an alien comes to Earth to check out its potential as a new home for his people, whose planet has run out of resources. There are a number of changes from the original Walter Tevis novel, not to mention the superior Nicholas Roeg film, all for the worst. The alien has a penchant for chatting to his faraway son in a manner reminiscent of Mork talking to Orson. The glow around the alien's hands when he heals people and his relationship with his son seem like ideas borrowed from the TV version of *STARMAN*.

Lewis Smith is unconvincing as the title character, without any of David Bowie's alienness. And the production certainly didn't need its several pointless musical interludes. The ending is particularly sloppy; the government agent (Robert Picardo), who knows Smith is an alien, is ordered to shut down Smith's attempt to take off in a rocket. And that's the last we hear about it. ● JPH

## MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

Directed by Gary Goddard. Cannon Group, 8/87, 106 mins. With: Dolph Lundgren, Frank Langella, Meg Foster, Billy Barty.

Wisely jettisoning most of the toy-inspired exposition to

keep things moving at a fast clip, viewers are left to connect the generic dots while holding onto their hats, and some may have felt left adrift. Gary Goddard's direction and David O'Dell's script provide a nicely mythic feel and make imaginative use of an Earthbound setting. The director's obvious admiration for *STAR WARS* goes a bit too far however, when Darth Vader's armor shows up on all the bad guys.

Michael Westmore's alien makeups seem stiff and inexpressive. Only Billy Barty as the diminutive Gwildor manages to shine through the rubber. Frank Langella, all but wasted as Skeletor, must have been smoldering under his skull mask, but the heat never comes through. James Tolkan is great as the game L.A. cop who gets swept up in the action and begins blasting away with his snubnose .45, and Chelsea Field as Teela is a nicely dynamic heroine. ●● FSC

## THE MONSTER SQUAD

Directed by Fred Dekker. Tri-Star, 8/87, 81 mins. With: Andre Gower, Duncan Regehr, Robby Kiger, Stephen Macht.

A joy for those who fondly remember the Universal horror films of the '40s. Apparently there aren't many still around who do, since this lovingly directed homage by Fred Dekker sunk like a stone at the boxoffice. Dekker perfectly captures what it's like to be a monster-loving kid, probably from memory, and coaxes winning ensemble performances from his young cast.

Worth seeking out for its wonderfully gothic sets and atmosphere, great monster makeups by Stan Winston (including the best Mummy ever), and its deft thematic contrast of fictional horror to the carnage of the real world. ●●● FSC

## MUNCHIES

Directed by Bettina Hirsch. Concorde Pictures, 6/87, 81 mins. With: Harvey Korman, Charles Stratton, Nadine Van Der Velde, Aliv Elias.

Not bad or goofy enough to be camp, this comedy from Roger Corman's Concorde Pictures isn't even funny. The newspaper ad manages to ripoff both *THE WOMAN IN RED* and *GREMLINS*, and the viewer as well, since the creatures depicted look nothing like the rubbery puppet in the film, which has no moving facial parts. The ad proclaims: "From the Creator of *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*," in the hope that gullible viewers will think of the recent Frank Oz film rather than the decades old Corman one.

Harvey Korman plays twins, one an archaeologist who journeys to Peru to try to prove his



The makeup for WEREWOLF by Greg Cannom and Rick Baker.

theory the Earth has been visited by ancient astronauts. Instead he finds a tiny creature which his son (Charles Stratton) names Arnold. Because the creature will eat practically anything, Stratton's girl friend (Nadine Van Der Velde) calls it a Munchie. The Munchie is stolen by Korman's evil twin, a fast food king, and turns mean when the twin's stepson (Jon Stafford) abuses it. When Stafford slices it up, each piece instantaneously turns into a new Munchie. The Munchies (created by Robert Short, with even less detail than John Buechler's GHOULIES) terrorize the town in unamusing ways before Stratton figures out electricity turns them into rock. A happy ending has the good Korman twin discover that the Earth was used in ancient times as a toxic waste dump of the gods. ● JPH

## THE OFFSPRING

Directed by Jeff Burr. The Movie Store, 10/87, 100 mins. With: Vincent Price, Clu Gulager, Cameron Mitchell, Terry Kiser.

Originally titled FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM, this is an anthology film connected by a common evil setting, Oldfield, Tennessee, using a Vincent Price introduction. Title only refers to the preposterous first tale in which Clu Gulager rapes a corpse and it gives birth to a zombie baby. Other tales include a man who is hacked and burned but can't die, a carnival geek who spurns a witch and has the things he swallowed burst out of him to his lover's dismay, and unsavory Union soldiers who meet the demented children of their victims. Many fine performers are wasted on less than inspired material. ● DKF

## THE OUTING

Directed by Tom Daley. 9/87. With: Deborah Winters, James Huston, Danny O. Daniels, Andra St. Ivanyi.

Crude direction and a wealth of technical difficulties mar this Houston-filmed story about an evil genie, produced as THE LAMP. A pair of lengthy prologues serve no purpose other than to satisfy someone's morbid penchant for bloody body parts. Nothing is really left up to the viewer's imagination. Characters do the expected. The script follows traditional routes that teens-in-turmoil pics usually take. Unfortunately, this dead-ends too often. The genie, though well-sculpted, has limited movement and its skin texture appears rubbery.

● Les Paul Robley

## THE PRINCESS BRIDE

Directed by Rob Reiner. 20th Century-Fox, 9/87, 98 mins. With: Robin Wright, Cary Elwes, Mandy Patinkin, Chris Sarandon.

William Goldman's zany renaissance satire has been turned into a hilarious epic comedy by Rob Reiner. On this eve of her wedding Princess Buttercup (Robin Wright) is spirited away by a trio of kidnappers. Pursued and rescued by a Zorro-like figure, she discovers her savior to be her long lost true love Wesley (Cary Elwes), reportedly killed by pirates. But, the lovers aren't out of the woods yet, in fact, they end up in the dreaded fire swamp pursued by the murderous bride groom. What follows is a wildly funny tale set off by delightful performances: Mandy Patinkin as the vengeful Spanish swordsman Inigo Montoya and Chris Sarandon as the ruthless prince are standouts in a brilliant cast.

● ● ● DS

## RAWHEAD REX

Directed by George Pavlou. Empire Pictures, 4/87, 89 mins. With: David Dukes, Kelly Piper, Ronan Wilmont, Niall Toibin.

Despite a hideous-looking creature, misty Irish locales, and moodily atmospheric cine-

matography, this Empire release with a script by British horror writer Clive Barker fails to impress. Director George Pavlou reveals the monster's shortcomings far too much. Pavlou breaks rules considered taboo in the makeup industry, showing full figure shots in broad daylight. When Rawhead shakes a motor home off its base it resembles an enraged punk rocker throwing a temper tantrum. Barker has concocted a ludicrous screenplay that tries to emulate the Hammer films of the '50s and '60s. Of some interest is the agonizing brass score of former keyboard artist Colin Towns, whose haunting themes graced Peter Straub's FULL CIRCLE.

● Les Paul Robley

## SHADEY

Directed by Philip Saville. Skouras Pictures, 6/87, 93 mins. With: Anthony Sher, Billie Whitelaw, Patrick Macnee, Leslie Ash.

This 1985 low-key British fantasy is now receiving limited release in the States. Shadey (Anthony Sher) is an unsuccessful garage mechanic with the ability to think images onto film—images of things he has never seen before, but which he plucks out of the minds of others—occasionally they are images of the future. He offers his talent to industrialist Patrick Macnee in order to get the money to finance a sex change operation, but Macnee sells him to the British military despite Shadey's protests that he wants nothing to do with wars and spying. The military double-cross Shadey, withholding the money for his operation, fearing that once he gets what he wants, he will refuse to cooperate. Shadey compels Katherine Helmond, Macnee's crazy, coal-eating wife, to stab him in the testicles, eliminating the need for surgery. In the end, as in BRAZIL, Shadey escapes into a dream vision he has entered repeatedly throughout the film.

In the hands of an actor with



Sam Jones as Will Eisner's THE SPIRIT charms Nana Visitor.

the puppydog charm of a Paul Sand, this film might have been engaging. Sher, who resembles Sand more than a little, does not have the requisite charisma to carry it off. However, it's worth catching just for Billie Whitelaw's wonderfully masculine, chain smoking Dr. Cloud. ● JPH

## SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT PART II

Directed by Lee Harry. Ascot Entertainment, 4/87, 88 mins. With: Eric Freeman, James I. Newman, Elizabeth Clayton, Jean Miller.

THE FRIDAY THE 13TH sequels look like classics compared to this spin-off of a movie whose sole notoriety derived from publicized objections of parents' organizations incensed over advertisements exhibiting an axe-wielding Santa Claus. By way of flashbacks, the institutionalized younger brother of the yuletide slasher relates to a psychiatrist how he came to carry on the family tradition of holiday mayhem. Production values are minimal and originality non-existent in a movie that's too boring to be distasteful. As opposed to the controversial November opening by Tri-Star of the original film, the sequel opened and closed quietly in April sans any yuletide notoriety, released by the distributor of DEMONS. ● VJB

## THE SPIRIT

Directed by Michael Schultz. ABC-TV, 8/87, 90 mins. With: Sam Jones, Nana Visitor, Bumper Robinson, Garry Walberg.

Will Eisner's comic book character hits the TV screen. Sam Jones stars as Denny Colt, who becomes the crime fighting spirit when he is thought to be killed while investigating a murder. Jones looks great in the Spirit's period garb, a blue suit, mask, and old-fashioned hat. The Spirit makes his headquarters in a run-down cemetery and goes on nocturnal raids against evil doers. Liberties have been taken with the hero but this

unsold pilot adds up to a mildly enjoyable TV experience. ● ● DS

## THE STEPFORD CHILDREN

Directed by Alan J. Levi. NBC-TV, 3/87, 120 mins. With: Barbara Eden, Don Murray, Richard Anderson, Dick Butkus.

This third visit to the idyllic town in Connecticut where men are men and women are robots finds housewife/lawyer Barbara (I DREAM OF JEANNIE) Eden bottled-up in a plot to turn the family unit into a well-oiled machine. Packing timely references to drug abuse, medical ethics, lax education, and even slam dancing, this crude parable of corrupt youth moves predictably but goes further in showing the biomechanics of the title characters than in previous outings. Led this time by Richard Anderson—here trading in THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN for a few cut-and-droid clones—the ubiquitous Men's Association (and male chauvinism) finally goes out in a blaze of glory, thus effectively nixing the dreaded onslaught of THE STEPFORD PETS.

● Dean Lamanna

## WEREWOLF

Executive producer, Stephen J. Cannell. Fox-TV, 7/87, 120 mins. With: John York, Michelle Johnson, Chuck Connors, Lance LeGault.

TV's first werewolf series is done with laudable seriousness—no camp humor here—and surprisingly explicit violence. It's good werewolf/bad werewolf as a yuppie, bitten by his best friend, stalks the crusty old sailor—the Count Dracula of werewolves—who is spreading the cult. The old werewolf (Chuck Connors) revels in slaughter; the young one (John York) abhors it. Favorable echoes of THE FUGITIVE abound. Rick Baker and Greg Cannom's full-body makeups are the best part of the show which is fairly sluggish and badly hurt by some pretentious narration. ● BK

Cary Elwes and Robin Wright in THE PRINCESS BRIDE.



## SUPERMAN IV

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saga, SUPERGIRL, than the earlier Superman films. The movie's level of craftsmanship is simply second-rate, from the mediocre cinematography and effects work to the sloppy editing to the casual adherence to the tenets of the Superman legend. (Our hero conveniently develops mysterious wall-rebuilding vision when he needs it to patch up the Great Wall of China.)

Director Sidney J. Furie (THE IPCRESS FILE, THE ENTITY) gets his job done efficiently, but brings the film neither the mythic overtones of Richard Donner's work nor Richard Lester's elegant comic sensibility. Furie's touch works best in the action scenes; brisk pacing and inventive staging help hide their erratic technical quality. Still, he fails to imbue these sequences—including a lengthy earth-spanning battle royale between Superman and Nuclear Man—with the buoyancy of the previous films. Superman seems less the champion of Truth, Justice, and the American Way, and more the weary cop on the beat for the thousandth time.

His friends and co-workers at the *Planet*, too appear more dutiful than enthusiastic, present because they were part of the earlier films, not because they fit into this particular story. Margot Kidder, returning to the center of things as Lois Lane after a cameo in SUPERMAN III, is saddled with such poor dialogue that her apparent boredom in her role is understandable. (She's at her best in her utterly plausible reaction to Clark Kent and Superman as two different people.) Jackie Cooper and Marc McClure's Perry White and Jimmy Olsen, always underutilized by the series, have been reduced to being little more than atmospheric set decoration in the *Daily Planet* office.

The new characters fare better. Mariel Hemingway as publisher of a major metropolitan newspaper sounds like egregious miscasting, but she's likable and low-key as Lacy Warfield; she makes her romantic attraction to mild-mannered Clark Kent more than the one-joke idea it might have been. In the relatively small part of Lacy's father David Warfield, the tycoon who buys out the *Daily Planet* with plans to retool it into a scandal sheet, Sam Wanamaker gives an enjoyably hammy performance that's comic-bookish in the best sense of the term.

And thank goodness for Christopher Reeve. He remains excellent in a role which he has every right to have grown sick of long ago. Nine years older than when he

first donned the red cape, he makes up for a certain loss of boyish enthusiasm with a maturity and emotional shading that save this disappointing movie from total disaster—a truly Superman-sized feat.

Reeve's performance constantly reminds us that neither Superman nor Clark Kent is his character's true identity. Beneath it all he is Kal-El, last son of Krypton, a benevolent outsider whose essential decency shines through both of the identities he has adopted on our planet. For the first time in SUPERMAN IV, Reeve lets us see Kal-El in some unguarded moments—at Pa Kent's farm, and later in Clark Kent's apartment—when he's just being himself.

At SUPERMAN IV's close, Kal-El takes a giant step towards shedding the case of (literal) alienation that has kept him apart from us, by making official his status as a citizen of Planet Earth. It's a nice note on which to end what will surely be—and should be—the last motion picture adventure of Superman for some time to come. □

## NIGHTFLYERS

continued from page 6

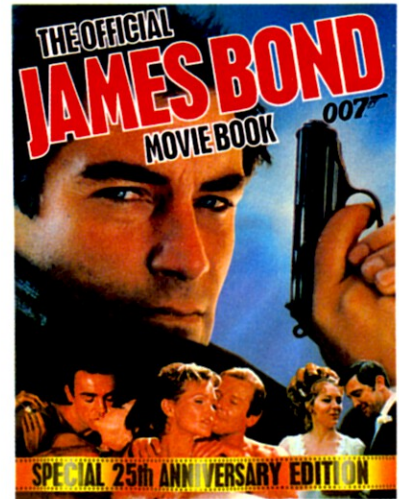
(approximately \$4 million) Jaffe has a right to be pleased. The production design by John Muto and the photography by Shelly Johnson create a look which is "richer than I'd envisioned," according to George R.R. Martin. Describing the thinking behind his designs for the Nightflyer, Robert Short said, "We were striving for the sleek, fiberglass design that a lot of high-speed boats have—not tiny little parts built up onto a big model. This ship is supposedly rented, so everything has a worn-out, beat-up, misused quality—the same kind of thing you get from a budget rent-a-car, where the last people who rented it didn't give a damn about how they treated the equipment." The results were quite satisfying to Martin, who said, "I'd imagined a real Spartan-type ship, with STAR TREK corridors. Instead, it's almost baroque, with a Captain Nemo-ish, gothic look."

Martin may be happy, but how will audiences react? Jaffe is concerned about audience expectations, and for that reason he likes to refer to his film as an "electronic ghost story," to distinguish it from larger-budgeted STAR WARS-type fare. "My suspicion is that it's gonna be more of a horror audience," said Jaffe, "because although there are a few relatively fresh concepts, the film isn't quite as thick in the details of SF as it is in mood and ambience." □

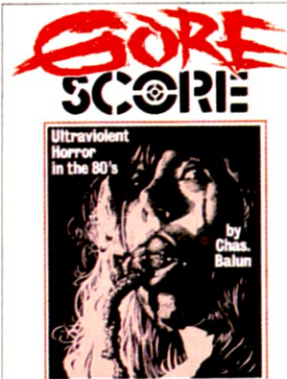
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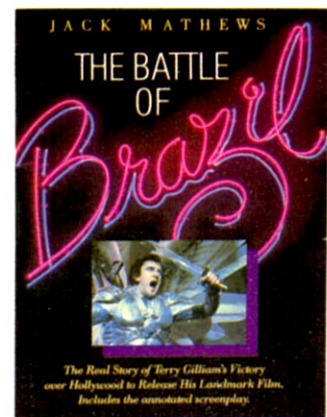


### HARDHITTING HORROR IN THE '80s

This revised and updated version of *The Gore Score*, Charles Balun's successful book of mini reviews is as uncompromising as the original in its frankness at critiquing what the horror genre has dished up over the past years. From MUTANT TO NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, the author buries the worst and resurrects the best, providing plot synopses and ratings for films released through the end of 1986. A handy guide for late night TV or video viewing. Pamphlet size, 64 pp. 6.95.

### GENRE ART VS. COMMERCE

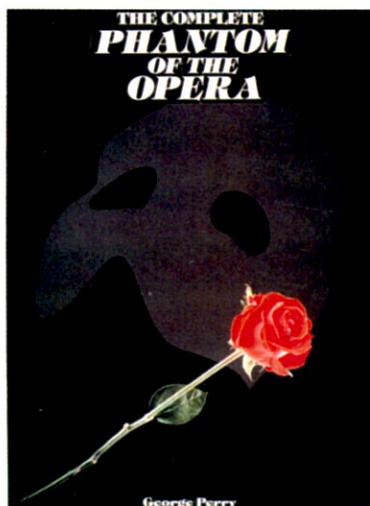
No motion picture in recent history has sparked as much controversy as Terry Gilliam's nightmare fantasy—BRAZIL. Despite being completed according to its approved shooting script, Gilliam's Orwellian black comedy was deemed unreleaseable by Universal Pictures, which feared it lacked commercial potential. *The Battle of BRAZIL* includes the full original screenplay and details the making of and the battle to distribute BRAZIL, and is a textbook model of the conflict of art and commerce in Hollywood. This saga, as bizarre as the movie itself, marks the first time a director has ever drawn a studio head into a public fight—and won! Illustrated, cloth 8X9 1/2, 240 pp. \$19.95



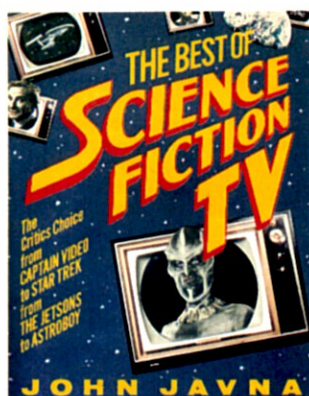
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## HORROR CLASSIC ON THE BOARDS

With the complete libretto & illustrations



Andrew Lloyd Webber's hit London stage adaptation of Gaston Leroux's novel (which follows in the footsteps of the highly successful 1925 silent film version with Lon Chaney) is set to debut on Broadway this fall, and this book is the perfect primer for gothic horror connoisseurs. Webber and others detail how the story became a musical, revealing secrets of the spectacular stage production. Includes the complete libretto and numerous color photos of the West End production. Cloth, 8 1/4 X 11 1/2, 176 pp. \$24.95

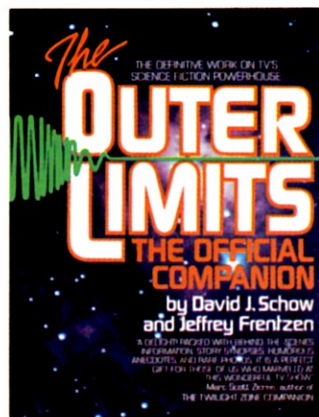


### A GUIDE TO SF TV HISTORY

From the classic to the colossal, the best and the worst science fiction shows to grace the cathode ray tube come to life in *The Best of Science Fiction TV*, an extravagant anthology of facts, photographs, and reviews. With lavishly illustrated sections devoted to each show, this book recaptures the appeal of memorable episodes through dialogue and vital statistics from the likes of STAR TREK to ASTROBOY. For all fans who take cult worship "One Step Beyond." Illustrated, 7 X 9 1/4, 144 pp. 8.95.

## THE OFFICIAL COMPANION

The first TV show to truly showcase startling visual effects, THE OUTER LIMITS was the creative seedbed for many of the people and techniques that later made STAR WARS and STAR TREK household words. This official guide tells the whole remarkable story, from the show's genesis, through the snags and successes of production to the stormy end in 1965. Filled with commentary by key players Leslie Stevens and Joseph Stefano, this unique overview provides the plotlines, credits, and production background on each of the 49 episodes, as well as information on the show's various spinoffs, from pilot films to bubble-gum cards. Paper, 5 1/2 X 8 1/2, 406 pp. \$8.95



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## HARRY REVIEW

continued from page 44

headed by John Lithgow, quickly (and predictably—this is E.T. country, after all) gets over its fright at discovering a Big Foot and develops a bond with the creature, dubbed Harry (Kevin Peter Hall), just an overgrown shag carpet. The antagonist is French Canadian trapper La Fleur (David Suchet, in a snarling performance that seems at odds with the film's otherwise light tone), who has been tracking the "beast" all his life.

The public's reaction to HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS seemed uncharacteristically harsh. I thought, given the benign nature of the film. Yes, it has a pre-packaged quality, and I'd be the first to agree that it challenges no one (making it suitable for everyone from baby sister to Grandma Moses) and is inoffensive to the point of lacking distinction—script problems, all. (Dear, William E. Martin and Ezra Rappaport are credited.) I would further argue that the film's endorsement of the domestication of Harry (i.e. wild animals) is capricious and irresponsible. And couldn't the film's weak-kneed anti-gun message been given stronger emphasis? I for one was not entirely convinced that George will lay down his hunting rifle as a result of his encounter with Harry. And there's the matter of him operating a gun store to resolve.

Overall, however, if you like your entertainment "nice" and undemanding, this is an assured slice of technically polished tomfoolery. Dear, a far better director than a writer, oversees the proceedings with a firm, professional hand, keeping the film's sentiment largely in check and occasionally sneaking in some genuinely funny offbeat humor—evidence, perhaps, that his true nature is hidden somewhere beneath the middle class sensibilities of this all-out commercial effort.

Production values are first-rate: Allen Daviau's photography is especially strong on point of view, the production design by James Bissell strikes a happy medium between the real and the fantastic and Donn Cambern's editing is sharp (the sequence with a spinning flashlight, for instance) and fully in tune with the rhythms of Dear's pacing.

Rick Baker's Harry—lovable without resorting to excessively cutesy mannerisms—strongly echoes his grossly underappreciated work in the '76 update of KING KONG. Working with Kevin Peter Hall (Arnold Schwarzenegger's nemesis in PREDATOR), Baker again shows his

adeptness at getting to the emotional subtext of his synthetic creations. By now we expect that his work will be precise and detailed (notice the eyes and yellowed teeth); what he also brings to Harry (with Hall's invaluable contribution) is the critical element of believability. A poorly executed creature design, as genre buffs will attest, will sink a movie faster than you can say PROPHECY. (Hall should know—he played the grizzly in the 1979 Frankenheimer flop.)

On the human side, Lithgow serves up another solid, sympathetic performance, maneuvering around his character's conflicting emotions with balletic precision. Don Ameche is warm and appealing as the beleaguered Dr. Wrightwood, a retired anthropologist who runs a Bigfoot tourist trap, and Laura Kenny makes the most of a hilarious cameo as a housewife who tries to squash Harry with a rolled-up magazine, thinking he is a mouse.

The missing link? With the Iran-contra hearings and news reports about AIDS and riots in Seoul blaring from their TV sets during the summer, Americans were relying more than ever on movies for an escape from the country's failing optimism. As evidenced by the staggering grosses for TOP GUN and LETHAL WEAPON, the moviegoing public's love affair with cinematic valentines (typified by E.T.) seemed over; in the summer of '87 they demanded raw, unflinching aggression, movies that celebrated death and destruction in the name of "doing the right thing"—hardware films like THE UNTOUCHABLES, ROBOCOP, PREDATOR and BEVERLY HILLS COP II. There is hardly a sensitive or emotionally responsible moment to be found in any of these films, and the uproarious endorsement by the audience of the casual and magnified bloodletting evident in them all is, in this reviewer's opinion, alarming.

Perhaps the public kissed off HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS (and the season's other wholesome adventure comedy, INNERSPACE) because it was just too mild-mannered and unspectacular; but maybe the real reason they stayed away in droves was because they were hungry for the flip-side of E.T.—movies that touched upon their repressed anger and increasing feelings of helplessness and despair. Think about it: had John Carpenter waited until this year to release THE THING (remember the critical beating he took for its dark and "ugly" tone?), he might have had the boxoffice hit of his career. □



## PRINCE OF DARKNESS

continued from page 7

lion—there's no independent in the world who is going to give somebody \$40 million and say go make your movie—there's a lot of bullshit that comes with it. You're talking about a major studio and you're talking about a lot of people who think they know what they're talking about. When you get more than one person who is creatively involved, who has any kind of say-so, then you've got confusion and you've got money that's not very well spent."

Franco declined to discuss the budget of *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*. "I think pictures get categorized by what is being spent on them," he said. "I can tell you, it's not a lot of money—it's very little money—and it looks bigger than it costs. We would like to believe that the film can stand on its own whether it's a \$22 million picture or a \$2 million. We don't want to pin down what it costs. I can tell you it's low."

The film came together very quickly. According to Franco, it was only seven weeks from first reading the script to beginning actual production. There was a desperate effort to finish filming before the threatened directors strike in July to make the release date in October. After two and a half weeks on L.A. locations the film wrapped after two and a quarter weeks of studio interiors. To keep the budget low Franco said most of the cast and crew agreed to work for less because they either wanted to do a picture with Carpenter or had worked with the director before. "There was a big family atmosphere that you don't find on a lot of pictures," he said.

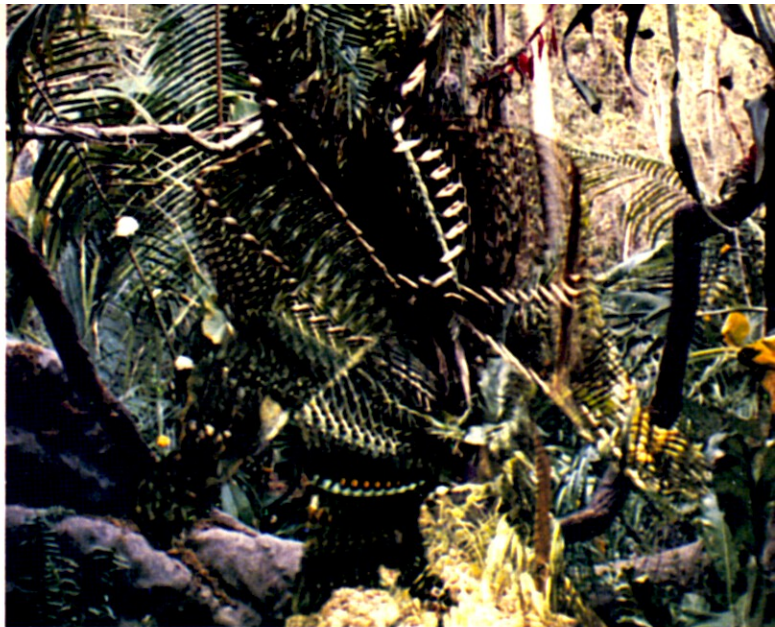
The film represents a big break for some of the crew. Gary Kibbe makes his debut as director of photography. Kibbe has been a camera operator for many of Hollywood's top cinematographers,

including former Carpenter associate Dean Cundey. Also new to the Carpenter team is Frank Carrisosa, who handled the film's special makeup effects. "What this guy did for the time and money we had is unbelievable," said Franco. "There was smoke coming out of that makeup trailer."

The cast of *PRINCE OF DARKNESS* includes several Carpenter alumni. Donald Pleasence, who plays the priest who is losing faith, was Dr. Sam Loomis in the first two *HALLOWEEN* films and the President in *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK*. Victor Wong, who plays Professor Birack, appeared as Egg Shen, the man who spins the tall tale that became *BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA*. Another Chinese actor from that film, Dennis Dun, plays one of Birack's skeptical and wisecracking students. Lisa Blount and Jameson Parker play two graduates who develop an interest in each other amidst the bizarre goings on, while Susan Blanchard plays Kelly, the first to get possessed.

According to Franco, the film is a conscious return to horror for Carpenter, who plans to tone down the explicitness and graphic violence of the genre. "I think people will be shocked at how scary and intense something can be without being explicit," said Franco. Carpenter will be adding to the suspense and intensity with a musical score he is writing and performing in association with Alan Howarth, who worked with him on *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK* and *CHRISTINE*. There is also, promised Franco, "a lot of low, wide-angle P.O.V.'s, a lot of shadows, a lot of what you do to build things in this kind of movie. But the story's a real interesting, psychological situation that has more to offer than just scares, a bunch of music zingers and a bunch of weird special effects." □

Producer Larry Franco (l) and director John Carpenter watch a take during filming of *PRINCE OF DARKNESS*, working independently with more creative control.



The jungle background appears to bend around the *PREDATOR* as it moves, an invisibility effect by R/Greenberg Associates that uses a series of in-line mattes.

## PREDATOR

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background plate automatically for reduction. "If it was just a straight reduction, it would center on the frame," said Hynek. "We needed a center of reduction to always follow the Predator around so you'd get a lined-up distortion."

The real trick was to combine the effect with a camera move. Any movement in the scene had to be repeated for the background plate without the actors. Hynek brought the company's field motion-control camera to Puerto Vallarta to shoot the monster suit originally made by Boss Films (see sidebar page 35). To save on expenses, 20th Century-Fox opted not to use the computer tracking system when the creature had to be refilmed several months later.

Hynek's crew managed to work out a way to track the system manually using a group of television monitors. They recorded the first move with the red creature on videotape, generating visible time code numbers right on the screen. After director John McTiernan picked the take he liked, the operator manually moved the camera on a dolly or gear head, recording the background plate without anyone in it. He visually linked the new move with the old by watching both of them on video monitors mounted side by side. Said Hynek, "The camouflage effect was somewhat forgiving in that if there's enough motion going on and we haven't matched exactly, viewers won't really be able to tell."

R/Greenberg Associates also created the thermal vision point-of-view shots of what the Predator is seeing. Infrared film couldn't be used because it doesn't register in the range of body temperature wavelengths. Instead an Inframetr-

rics thermal video scanner was used, which gives excellent heat images of objects, including people. Thermal vision supervisor Stuart Robertson rigged the video camera to the 35mm motion picture camera, using a beam splitter. The film image was processed as a high contrast black and white image and was composited with the black and white video thermal image which could be colored with a palette of colors assigned using the Inframetrics decoder.

Eric Chamberlain and Ted Churchill devised a way to mount the twin camera on a Steadicam harness. First camera assistant Rob Agganis chased Arnold Schwarzenegger through the jungle in Mexico with the Steadicam mounted units looking like some weird alien weapon. Running after them were infrared camera operators Pete Sekelick and Frank Bryson, both adjusting a little box of encoders and scanning equipment. Behind them trailed hundreds of feet of video cable powering the units. Lastly ran a dozen more people making sure the cables didn't get snagged on anything. No wonder Schwarzenegger was in such a hurry.

For the Predator's glowing blood R/Greenberg used the green liquid from chem-lite sticks used by campers and scuba divers. The electrical spark effects as the Predator becomes visible were rotoscoped animation. Due to the pressing release deadline the effects were parceled out and drawn by various New York artists in their homes using white paper pin registered on portable light tables to black and white prints of the film frames. The drawings were then composited by the optical crew at R/Greenberg for the finished effects. □

## MAX HEADROOM

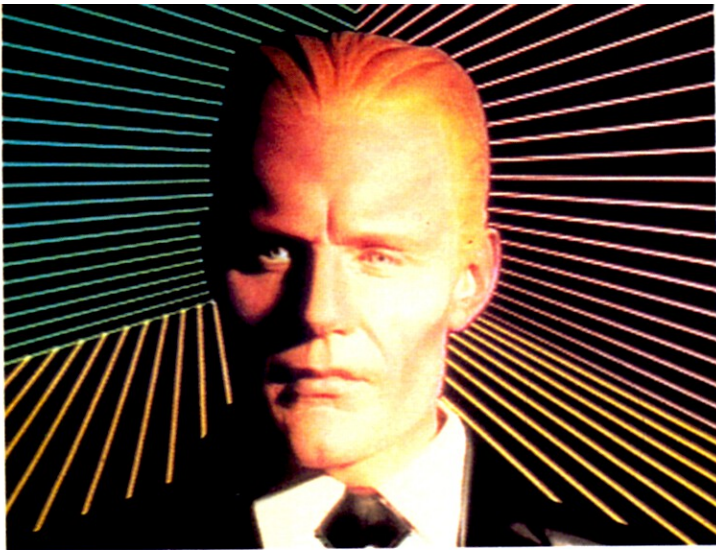
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made an inane giggle of a laugh and a gleeful stutter his distinctive trademarks. Popping up on Network 23 whenever and saying whatever he wants, the inane and flakey Max charms viewers with his outrageous self-hype. "Wow, wow," bubbles Max, "he could become a star!"

The subsequent episodes of MAX HEADROOM targeted various hi-tech conspiracies for the recovered Edison Carter to ferret out—either with or in spite of Max's "assistance." One of the show's ironies is that Carter and Max (both portrayed by Canadian Matt Frewer) are equally artificial. Himself a master of all the TV reporter's glib phrases and affected mannerisms, Edison Carter relies on the computer-hacking skills of his controller, Theora Jones (Amanda Pays) to gain access to the information he needs for his exposes. So far, most of those exposes have fallen into categories familiar to SF filmgoers.

Undoubtedly the weakest of the original six shows, episode two, though well done, was obviously derivative, with Edison Carter exposing the corrupt world of "rakeboarding," a violent game clearly inspired by ROLLERBALL and what someone must have thought was the heady success of SOLARBABIES. Episode three had Carter exposing a black-market in body parts for the very rich, territory also covered in COMA and the less well-known CLONUS HORROR. However, Michael Cassutt offers an alternative source for this script, explaining that like most ideas for MAX it came from an everyday occurrence, in this case executive story editor Steve Roberts' looking at the organ donor information on the back of his driver's license.

With episode four, MAX began to really hit its stride. "All I could think of was the BLADERUNNER look with a BRAZIL sensibility," explains Cassutt of his script for that episode, written before he had seen the American Max in action. And that episode was clearly in part an homage to the cyberpunk world of William Gibson's *Neuromancer*. The story turns on the ways in which Security Systems, an all-powerful centralized corporate data base, can control the fate of individuals and of society itself by manipulating its records. Framed for credit fraud (a crime "worse than murder"), Edison Carter discovers how pervasive is the power of Security Systems, which is managed by female-voiced artificial intelligence, A-7. Offering TV audiences a first—of sorts—in electronic flirtation, Max soothes



Matt Frewer as MAX HEADROOM, the computer-generated alter ego of news reporter Edison Carther. The Max image is actually achieved by Frewer in makeup.

A-7 by saying, "I'm sure you're just as real as I am." Tittering that she's "never been accessed like that before," the now rebellious A-7 tells her human programmers, "You can turn me off, but only Max can turn me on." With its depiction of cracking the "ice" of the security programs defending A-7, this episode, one of the best of the original six, moved firmly and inevitably into the cyberpunk vision of the future.

The two remaining episodes dealt with the staging of new events by a corrupt TV programmer and a fanatical band of urban guerillas, and with video politics as a corrupt politician manipulates the media while trying to destroy all remaining "blanks," individuals not tied into the centralized media net. Although lightened by Max's quips and his mocking of the actual commercials for his show, these latter three episodes broached serious topics, already uncomfortably close to home for our TV-centered culture. It is this surprising tendency toward self-parody that makes MAX such a refreshing presence, boldly extending the tradition of NETWORK where a talking head has never gone before.

It is precisely MAX's potential "to be subversive" that most interests SF writer John Shirley, one of the earliest and most successful of the cyberpunk writers. "I think it's the most interesting thing on network TV," said Shirley, adding his belief that "if you can get ten minutes of radical information out of a sixty minute show, that justifies the whole thing." At its best, noted Shirley, "MAX gets twenty minutes of radical information across to viewers, spinning a lot of ideas at you in a dense spectrum."

Shirley described his script for one of next season's episodes as dealing with a company that accesses unused parts of the human brain, renting out its sub-

ject's "brain time" as a cheap substitute for computer time on a big main frame. "My idea," Shirley explained, "was to exploit the fact that the human brain, without enhancement, is capable of storing more information than is the most powerful computer." Author of the hard-hitting *City Come A Walking* and *Eclipse* (about to be re-issued as a Warner paperback), Shirley is the kind of writer who can help MAX retain its subversive edge.

Extremely costly to produce (each episode well in excess of a million dollars), MAX HEADROOM brings to TV science fiction the gritty, realistic look and feel of a show like HILL STREET BLUES. "It takes about three months," revealed Cassutt, "to turn a one sentence idea into a MAX HEADROOM episode." Attention to detail and a mania for visual and verbal texture characterize its production. Part of the show's distinctive, densely textured look results from the fact that its non-Max scenes are filmed on 35mm at almost 30 frames per second, rather than at the usual 24. This gives the filmed segments a greater image density, allowing them to be better synchronized with the show's videotaped segments. The norm for filming a network program is eight days per episode, but Cassutt notes that MAX's first episode took sixteen, "and that was a remake." Elaborate post-production follows taping, sometimes adding another two weeks per episode. "Shows are post-produced as much as they are produced," said Cassutt, noting the effort necessary to coordinate the pictures and soundtracks on the TV monitors that clutter MAX's interior and exterior shots.

Asked for his own view of the show and its obvious kinship with the techniques of music video, Cassutt cheerfully acknowledged

that he loves MTV, adding: "In my own small way, I've tried to turn MAX into M&M TV—brain candy." Having spent six years in television as a programmer, Cassutt also brings to MAX HEADROOM what he termed a "certain inside perspective on TV politics." Expressing his hopes for next season's thirteen episodes, Cassutt, who has previously written for TWILIGHT ZONE, MISFITS OF SCIENCE, SIMON & SIMON, and ALICE, admitted that the show may finally appeal most to a specialized audience. Speaking for himself, Cassutt mused, "I'd like to see it get the respect that people accord THE PRISONER." □

## THE BELIEVERS

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landlady-girlfriend Helen Shaver coaxed into a bizarre tango with a creepy Santeria shaman, played with remarkable conviction by black actor Khali Keyi. For all its malevolent sexual energy and cloying evil, the scene goes nowhere—dropping audience expectation with a resounding thud. The suspense is never recovered.

Much like THE EXORCIST, THE BELIEVERS works most efficiently during its quiet moments, where the horror is a tingling that climbs the viewer's spine. This is best exemplified when an embattled police lieutenant (Robert Loggia), in a scene as disquieting as it is protracted, commits suicide when paranoia brought on by the shaman's curse surfeits the air about him. On the visceral side, the most striking of the film's few outright scares occur when an autopsy bowl is found full of writhing snakes and a hideous, ever-growing zit on Shaver's cheek starts erupting black spiders.

With films such as MIDNIGHT COWBOY and MARATHON MAN to his credit, Schlesinger is a director of demonstrable talent who knows how to handle actors, establish tangible character interplay, and set up eye-catching shots—so it is a virtual given that THE BELIEVERS is a well-acted, well-crafted movie. The reason why it fizzles as a horror film can be found in Mark Frost's script (based on Nicholas Conde's novel, *The Religion*), which trashes the story's hard-earned subtext of spiritual corruption for a slack, predictable climax.

The film does, however, avoid the temptation of the typically strained, clichéd "twist" ending and instead offers a parting "surprise" that arises organically from the emotional resonance of the plot. But the obvious bane that

afflicts **THE BELIEVERS** also squelched **ANGEL HEART** and **THE SHINING**: infinite buildup with little or no payoff. Aside from its heady artistic pretension and random, requisite moments of terror, the ominous atmosphere the film takes pains to create is something from which horror should descend as swiftly and unexpectedly as a lightning bolt—but simply doesn't. □

## BATTERIES

continued from page 13

will enjoy are the extensive and elaborate special effects being supplied by George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic. Bruce Nicholson, who supervised ILM's work for **STARMAN** and **EXPLORERS**, oversaw the effects operation. **STAR WARS'** Ralph McQuarrie did initial design work on the look of the 10" diameter saucers, which come equipped with retractable electric cords that plug into any AC outlet as a power source. Paul Huston contributed extensively to the final saucer designs, which were built by Greg Jein, the meticulous modelmaker of Spielberg's **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND**, brought onto the effects staff by Robbins, who also recruited stop-motion animation expert David Allen to bring the saucers to life.

Saucer action is realized primarily with hand activated rod puppets of the kind used by Allen in the Oscar-nominated effects for Spielberg's **YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES**, though a variety of techniques including stop-motion and go-motion were employed. The puppet rods are connected to the saucer models in various locations depending on the action required, and are masked either by the set, the model, the action, or the camera framing. The effects were filmed on the actual live-action sets built at both ILM and Universal, with actors present.

The saucers and their antics could go a long way in selling the picture to audiences on novelty alone. Nothing like these characters or the special effects action sequences devised for them has ever been seen outside the realm of cartoon animation. In one sequence, after eying Harry's pin-ups and a lingerie commercial on TV, Ma Saucer sprouts a pair of chrome legs and does a sexy dance. When one of the characters examines a saucer under a magnifying glass, the saucer sprouts a little arm and knocks the glass away. To realize such bizarre action, ILM employed a technique known as replacement animation, a series of sculptures filmed sequentially frame by frame to show some

change or metamorphosis. The saucers eat metal in order to grow body parts as well as propogate. After use the limbs are cast off. One character, after examining a discarded arm and seeing a brand name embossed in the metal exclaims "This was made from my old coffee pot." The little babies walk on tiny legs and have name brands from canned goods stamped on their hulls.

In a number of sequences the saucers are seen helping run the grill on the building's main floor, operated by one of the tenants. The hamburgers are cooked by a saucer hovering over the meat patties, its bottom glowing cherry red. Another saucer slices bananas. The babies get into mischief. One, seen walking on the grill, gets covered by a slice of cheese with the other burgers and is scooped up on a bun and served to one of the customers. Little feet suddenly jut out from the burger, flailing wildly, and flip the sandwich over, which runs down the counter top like some surreal turtle.

The wild saucer action is built around human dramas involving the film's main characters, but the story of the building and its tenants never develops beyond being a prop on which to hang all the special effects, and the two storylines never mesh. One characteristic of the saucers is that they fix things—broken egg shells, a photo ripped to pieces, a smashed statue. When the tenement explodes and burns to the ground at the film's climax, torched by an arsonist hired by an unscrupulous developer, the outcome is never in doubt. A flotilla of hundreds of saucers shows up to rebuild the century old structure as if it were brand new, and then they are gone.

But what *are* the saucers and where do they come from? The film never provides even a clue. Like so many episodes of **AMAZING STORIES** in which the inexplicable just happens, the fact that they're amazing is supposed to be enough. □

## SCHLESINGER

continued from page 47

lengthen that part of the film or make audiences think that was the end of the movie."

The lawyer had a bigger part in the original script when Sheen sued the coffee pot company for the death of his wife. His landlord girlfriend picks up a justice spell at a botanica when he is called away to the murder site on the barge. When the lawyer argues with her about buying the potion, it accidentally spills on the suit papers. Weeks later they learn that the company settled for a large sum of



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Werewolf in a Girls Dormitory, Corridors of Blood, Attack of the Killer Shrews, Eggah!, Creature From the Haunted Sea, Creature Walks Among Us, Horror of Party Beach, The Old Dark House (Bill Castle), The Mysterious Island (original '29), The Bride of Frankenstein, The Skull, Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman, From Hell it Came, Gorilla at Large, Bride of the Monster, The Haunting, The Mummy (31), Frankenstein 1970, The Slime People, Dr. Blood's Coffin, Mighty Joe Young, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, The Monster, The Exorcist, The Crawling Hand, The Haunted Strangler, Curse of the Demon, The Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas, The Little Shop of Horrors, The Fearless Vampire Killers, The Phantom of the Opera (42), The Devil Dolls (Tod Browning), The Climax (Karloff)

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money.

Although most of the film's action takes place in New York City, only two and a half weeks of location shooting were done there. The economics of the \$13 million production dictated an off-site shoot and Toronto filled in for the Big Apple for most of the production.

Reflecting on his interest in THE BELIEVERS, Schlesinger said, "I think that quite often the subjects I choose to do are all somewhat on the dark side, about people who are under some form of pressure or are going through an extreme experience. It's never about sunny subjects. I always seem to choose people who are pushed to the edge in some way. I like the thriller genre. I enjoyed doing MARATHON MAN very much and I wanted to have a crack at doing another one." □

## WILLIAM DEAR

continued from page 45

how right I was in my conviction that he was the only person who could play George. It was the best and worst situation imaginable. Lithgow has this wonderful innocence in his face. He can be a family man at the beginning, but he can transform into this amazing six-foot-tall child.

"So, at the end of the meeting with Lithgow, I showed him an artist's conception of Harry that Rick Baker and I had agreed upon. [This drawing is the one which appears in the final film as the portrait of Harry as drawn by George Henderson.] John saw the drawing and he said, 'This is magnificent. I'd be interested in looking at a second draft...' And so, he was still on the hook. When the second draft came about two months later, he agreed to do it. That really spear-headed the entire casting process."

Once HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS began production, Spielberg stopped by the set a few times, but Dear said it was entirely his own show. "He was very helpful," Dear said. "He forced us to challenge ourselves. He'd ask us, 'Is this as good as it can be? Is it as rich as it can be?' When it came time to shoot, he wrote me a note: 'The script is in the best shape it's ever been in. Have a good shoot. Can't wait to see the cut.' He didn't come to any dailies. He visited the set three times for about an hour. He left us alone to make our movie. Come last December 15, he was looking at it with very fresh eyes. At that point, he offered us his expertise. He'd say, 'I think you can trim this scene down a bit.' And this and that. It was a great way to make a

film. You were in probably the best place to make a film in the system, which is Amblin. You were really left to your own devices. You had the wonderful and terrifying job of doing your own movie."

When it came time for HARRY to end, Dear was undecided about which denouement worked best. He had 12 different ideas. "We had Harry simply being rejected. We had Dr. Wrightwood (Oscar winner Don Ameche) walking away with Harry at the end. We had Harry coming back to the Henderson house. We had Harry running back out of the woods. I had a bunch of endings. Endings are funny. When you're going through the editing process, you have to be alert to the fact that your film changes and grows. While we were on location, I filmed a lot of varying ideas on the ending."

Eventually, Dear decided to go with the final shot in which a whole family of sasquatch appears out of nowhere to welcome Harry back to their ranks. All the creatures are out in plain sight, but nobody sees them until they move. "That's part of the Bigfoot myth," Dear explained. "Their camouflage is to stand perfectly still. In that multiple Bigfoot scene, I deliberately chose to put a father, mother and child creature in there so you didn't think it was Harry's family, like he'd been away from his family. That way, nobody had to wonder, 'Well, why didn't Harry miss his family?' I was at first reluctant to use that ending. But I think people like the notion that they're seeing something that they didn't see at first. It's a nice surprise. Films should be full of surprises."

"I hope the anti-gun message doesn't spur NRA-type enthusiasts to go out into the wilderness and be determined as hell to bring one of these things down," Dear said. "That would be very wrong, although I'm not going to be surprised by that action."

If Dear worries about his movie causing massive Bigfoot hunts does that mean he believes in the existence of sasquatch? "I really do," he said. "Although they haven't found a carcass, the evidence is just too overwhelming. Too many people have sighted it, and there are large numbers of footprint castings. I believe it exists. One of the things we learned filming in the Northwest was that something could be standing 50 feet away and you couldn't see it. So I think it's entirely possible that this creature who lives in the woods could have survived without being caught. Also, I think people want to believe. I believe in UFOs too." □

## INNERSPACE EFFECTS

continued from page 43

continued Muren. "The sleeve had a ziplock at the top so that it would stay sealed until our camera and pod rig passed through any given point; then it would unzip as the rods supporting the camera and the pod model from above went by, and then zip back up again in their wake. The camera was in a waterproof container. It took our cameraman John Fante many takes to get everything coordinated properly: the blood cells racing along, the camera moving at the right speed and the whole thing lit correctly. That was quite an operation. Our stage hands did a wonderful job on this film. They were called on to solve dozens of problems a day. Because many shots were done in the camera, that's where the buck stopped."

Muren pushed for the use of a forced-perspective car set for the sequence in which the normal sized heroes are riding in the front seat while the miniaturized villains are confined to the car's double-scale back seat. Producer Mike Finnell and Dante wanted to film the sequence optically, using blue screen. Muren convinced them to film it live with a twelve foot wide, twenty-five foot long forced perspective rig, which cinematographer Andy Laszlo suggested be put on a gimbal to simulate the motions of the car.

"Joe Dante and Mike Finnell couldn't quite visualize it," said Muren. "They found the idea kind of scary because it wasn't what they were used to. I built a couple of mockups to show them the scale and help explain the advantages."

"In effects films today, everything tends to get done one step at a time," continued Muren. "It's all composited at the end in optical. Using this technique, we had the whole sequence finished in less than a week." □

Cartoon-inspired director Joe Dante.



## INNERSPACE

continued from page 43

Dante deals here, ostensibly anyway, with adults. Miniaturized with an exploratory vehicle for a bio-tech experiment, hot-shot test pilot Lt. Tuck Pendelton (Dennis Quaid) is injected into the bloodstream of hypertensive supermarket clerk Jack Putter (Martin Short). The action moves along two intertwining tracks, crossing back and forth from capers to character. The first concerns the desperate procurement of a micro-chip McGuffin to rescue Tuck from Jack's innards. The second and more interesting focus traces the personality change Tuck's entry works on Jack. Playing Humphrey Bogart to Jack's Woody Allen, Tuck instills *intestinal* fortitude in his host, curing his hypochondria and "wuss-puss" attitude.

The cross-cutting between Jack's Tuck-inhabited interior and his exterior world, and the zany junctions between the two, is the hook for the film's comedy, some of it genuinely inspired. Dante seamlessly sutures the inside track (Tuck) with the outside schmuck (Jack) for an exhilarating dual perspective on the incongruities. For this kind of humor, timing is everything and Short's desperate reactions to an inner voice only he can hear, especially in tandem with former SCTV cohorts Joe Flaherty and Andrea Martin, is hilarious. Likewise, the comedian's trademark physical gyrations are played to fine effect in a boozy "twistin' the night away" romp around Tuck's apartment. No less than the comedy, the action scenes are doubly fast-paced, rendered from two vantages in rapid cross-cutting. Even chase scene stalwarts—careening cars, hanging men—pack more wallop through Dante's double vision.

Of course, the Jack-Tuck relationship is the real heart of the drama and there is a neat parallel to the give-and-take in the bond that emerges between the unlikely pair. Thus, where Jack needs a *macho makeover*, Tuck requires male sensitivity training. In a painful opening sequence, Tuck comes on as a drunken lout living off past glories. His girlfriend Lydia (Meg Ryan, who as the second female lead in *TOP GUN* scored higher than Kelly McGillis) is briefly charmed by his boyish vulnerability and Sam Cooke impression, but she knows this guy is Bad News and wisely splits early on. Short has most of the show-stopping numbers, but Quaid, in his third outing as an arrogant fighter jockey has the greater acting challenge. Inside his innerspace vehi-



Meg Ryan chooses to marry handsome jerk Dennis Quaid (r) rather than transformed nerd Martin Short in the unexpectedly sad conclusion of Joe Dante's *INNERSPACE*.

cle, he has no room for movement and no one to play off of. That he manages to construct a character at all is remarkable in a part that is incomplete and underwritten. He manages to survive by scavenging from *ENEMY MINE* and his wonderful performance as Gordo Cooper in *THE RIGHT STUFF*.

Nonetheless, Quaid's development gets much shorter shrift than Short's. The omission is most notable in a subplot involving Jack's alcoholism, which is treated with alternate seriousness and frivolity. Tuck's boozing is bleak and destructive, costing him the esteem of his fellow pilots and the love of his girl. The problem is underscored when Tuck's first response to his innerspace entrapment is to get himself, and Jack, smashed on scotch. Then, after a bout of daytime boozing, in a move that must have MADD furious, he tells an inebriated Jack to take his car and drive downtown. End of drinking subplot, beginning of continuity trouble.

Another odd narrative lapse is the introduction of an illegal arms dealer named Cowboy (Robert Picardo) whose only discernible purpose is for Dante and Rob Bottin to work some cartoonish facial changes on the Martin Short character. The fanciful facial exertions are a wonder to watch, but they are also the one departure from the scientific reality of the film's central conceit and an ill-advised detour into fantasyland.

Through *INNERSPACE*, the director litters the lens with random homages to formulative films. (The demolition of *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* in *GREM-LINS* had all the charm and spontaneity of a toy manufacturer's ad campaign.) Dante falls short of the usual quota here, but the casting makes up points. The villains are deliciously played by Kevin McCarthy, an SF film reference unto himself, and Fiona Lewis, best known for her femme fatale turns in the *STRANGE INVAD-*

*ERS* couplet. Also along are mass-cult worthies such as Dick Miller as a cabbie, William Schallert as Putter's bemused doctor, Henry Gibson as Jack's supermarket supervisor, Vernon Wells (the mohawked madman from *THE ROAD WARRIOR*) as a snappy bad guy, and Chuck Jones himself in a brief cameo.

The real special effects display, naturally, is the interior journey through Jack's private parts. Some of the world is actual surgery footage—a nice inside job—and the rest is spooky imaginings by ILM of the usual intra-body hang-outs—esophagus, intestines, optic nerve, eardrum. A striking pay-off occurs after Tuck is inadvertently transported to Lydia's insides—and he blunders straight into her womb to discover a 2001-style, seemingly animate fetus.

In good '80s form, the pregnancy leads in a straight line to marriage with Lydia who chooses Tuck over the Short end of the stick. That closure is unexpectedly sad: Jack has fallen for Lydia too, but he can have no chance with this doll. Her preference for Tuck, the jerk, is preordained, the assumption being that the handsome hunk Quaid is by definition a better catch than Short, transformed or not.

Despite the whimsical finale, Dante has a basic mean streak not unlike the *Chuck Jones* cartoons he so admires. He can't seem to decide between characters or cartoons—as in the rib-tickling when Tuck penetrates the surface behind Jack's eye and the latter screeches in pain. The stance of the director brings to mind that famous *Chuck Jones* cartoon, *DUCK AMUCK*, where poor Daffy Duck is bent, beaten, and mishapened by the omnipotent hand of the artist—which turns out to be Bugs Bunny. Dante's annoying proclivity for inside references seems to be his way of saying, with Bugs, "Ain't I a stinker?" □

# LETTERS

## PAGING DARTH VADER'S TAILOR

There's a question posed in your last *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* article [17:5:41] that I cannot let go unanswered. Underneath the photo of the Grayskull throne room it is asked "But why do all the palace guards wear helmets and costumes that make them look like Darth Vader from *STAR WARS*?"

Due to the distasteful nature of film politics I cannot give you the full answer; however, I can tell you that both costume designer Julie Weiss and I had nothing to do with those costumes, and in fact heavily fought and protested their look right up until their final manufacture. Our good taste and desire to be completely original was unfortunately overruled by higher-ups.

I hope that in reviewing *MASTERS* (and I know this will be difficult) you attempt to see the film without the prejudice that has colored many perceptions of it. Put simply, it's "How dare anyone be so crass and shallow as to make a film based upon a toy?" That is understandable. I turned down the film several times over a period of four years because of that prejudice. It was director Gary Goddard who changed my mind with his vision of a film that would hopefully leave the triviality of the toys in the dust. I hope you judge *MASTERS* on its merits as a *film*, not as a toy by-product. A \$25 million toy commercial was never our intention.

William Stout  
Production Designer

## ALL THOSE WHO "CREATED" MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE, LINE UP HERE

This should sound like sour grapes. Since I'm reaping no financial reward from my involvement in the *MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE* "phenomenon," I feel that I, at the very least, deserve some credit. In 1979 or 1980 I was approached by Western Publishing Company (owned by Mattel Toys) to write stories for five booklets to be included with various toys in their new line (later to be called "Masters of the Universe"). For reference, I was given polaroid shots of the prototype toys, some still unnamed. This was all "work for hire," meaning that the creator is paid a one-time flat fee,

while the company retains all rights to what is created. The project became less appealing when Western/Mattel began to ask for characters to be named and given origins and backgrounds.

Having just finished the novelization of *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*, I didn't need the credit or money for this assignment, but took it anyway, mainly because my Western editor was a friend who needed someone reliable to get the job done satisfactorily and on schedule. At least I was assured that I would receive a writing credit on the booklets, though, when published, the booklets were without a byline.

Some of the names were already there, including "He-Man," "Beastman," and "Man-at-Arms." "Eternia" was mine and required about ten seconds of thought. As the castle looked gray, not green, on the polaroid photos, I named it "Castle Grayskull" after my then wife, whose maiden name was Linda Gray. "Teela," for anyone recalling the old *SMILIN' ED'S ANDY'S GANG* TV show, was named after a pachyderm. (Remember the stories of "Gunga Ram" and his great bull elephant "Teela"?) "Mer-Man" was my name, also. The title of one of the booklets, "Battle in the Clouds," was that of an old silent SF movie for which I had a fondness.

Interestingly, Teela originated because I wanted a female figure. Then someone at Mattel saw the possibilities in making a Teela toy and recycling the same mold for additional female characters. I remember facetiously suggesting that one of these characters be patterned after He-Man, named "She-Man" (hardly more ridiculous a name than "He-Man"), but my joke was not well received. Apparently Western/Mattel took these characters a lot more seriously than I did.

Don Glut  
Burbank, CA 91504

## WATCH THAT DECIMAL POINT!

I was pleased to see an article on *DOIN' TIME ON PLANET EARTH* appear in your September issue [17:5:12]. Unfortunately, we did not have a \$27 million budget. It was, in fact, less than 10% of the figure quoted.

Charles Matthau  
Director

## THEY MAY BE SEXIST, BUT THEY'RE FUN

John Norman's *Gor* novels are blatantly sexist and espouse a philosophy which I in no way advocate. However, Nancy Garcia appears to be so opposed to Norman's views as to be totally incapable of objective evaluation when it comes to his books [*Tarnsman of Gor*, 17:5:20].

In addition to being sexist the books contain a good amount of color, excitement, action, and an occasional original idea. *Tarnsman of Gor* is actually a very entertaining book that contains very little of the sexist proselytizing found in later volumes. It is unfortunate that Cannon Films has eliminated the exotic fauna of *Gor*. A movie featuring the giant hawk-like *tarns* would be reminiscent of Willis O'Brien's failed project, *WAR EAGLES*.

Your choice of writers to cover particular stories should be made more carefully.

David A. Lathrap  
San Diego, CA 92105

## THE GRAYING OF STAR TREK

I am offended by Thomas Doherty's ideas about culling the crew of *The Enterprise* of its senior members ["What's Wrong With *STAR TREK*," 17:3/4:28]. I had thought their age imparted intensity and maturity, rather refreshing in an era of smooth-faced actor-models. Replacing the feeble, overweight, or slightly-balding would mean tampering with a basic *TREK* principle: the loyalty and cohesive love that binds each member one to another. Only a fool (or an emotionally bankrupt critic) would meddle with such admirable sentiment.

It is a lasting tribute to the previous generations of filmmakers that dozens of well-financed young upstarts with limitless technology and excessive faith in their "innovative" concepts have consistently failed to eclipse the accomplishments of their elders. It is likely that the new *TV TREK* will employ some of Mr. Doherty's "improvements," and will go the way of the "new" Kong or the "new" Lone Ranger, fading rapidly into obscurity while the old crew labors into hoary decrepitude.

Al Shamic  
Lincoln Park, MI 48146

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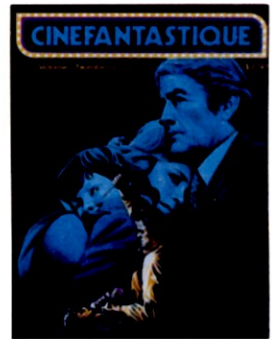
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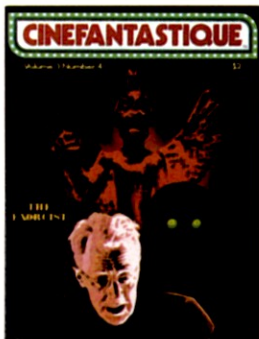
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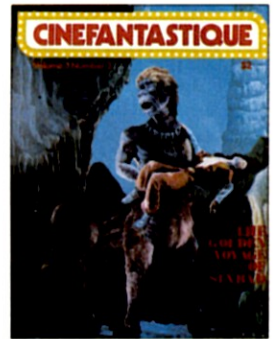
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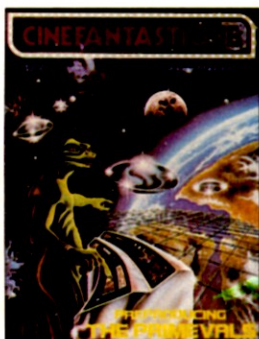
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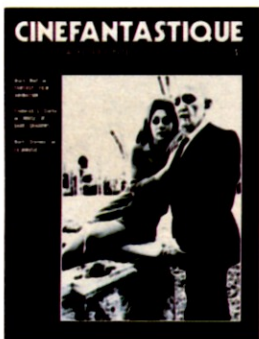
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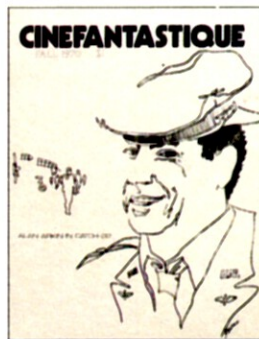
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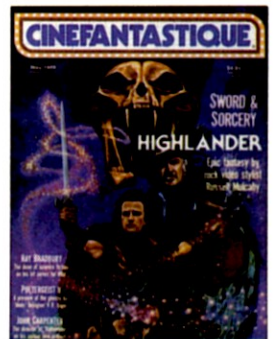
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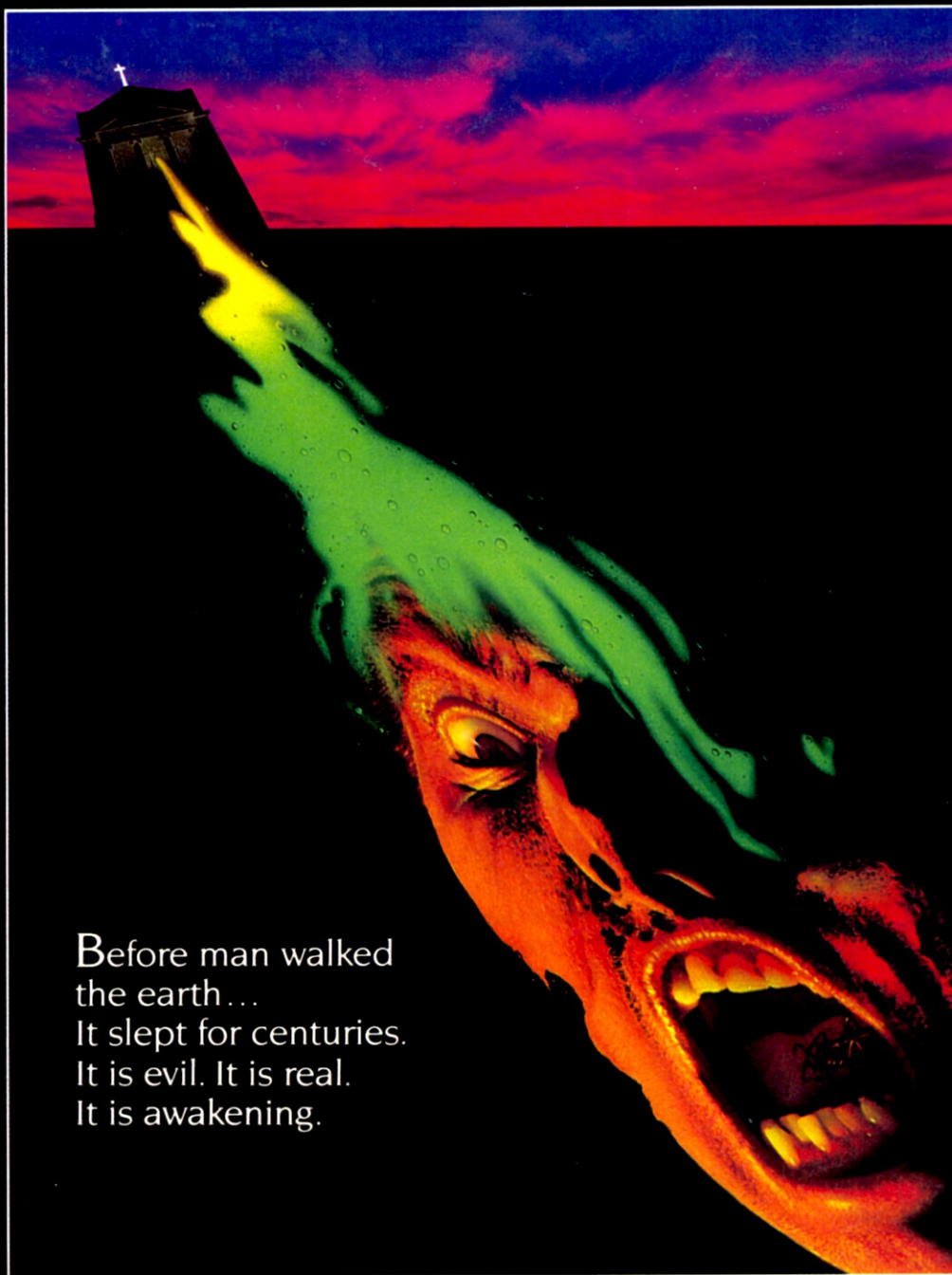


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**PRINCE OF DARKNESS**

A LARRY FRANCO Production JOHN CARPENTER'S "PRINCE OF DARKNESS"  
DONALD PLEASANCE LISA BLOUNT VICTOR WONG JAMESON PARKER as Brian  
Written by MARTIN QUATERMASS Music by JOHN CARPENTER in association with ALAN HOWARTH  
Executive Producers SHEP GORDON and ANDRE BLAY Produced by LARRY FRANCO Directed by JOHN CARPENTER  
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